

SANCTITY
AND
SOCIAL SERVICE

J. ELLIOT ROSS

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SANCTITY AND SOCIAL SERVICE

Sanctity and Social Service

BY

J. ELLIOT ROSS, C.S.P., Ph.D.
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NEW YORK
THE DEVIN-ADAIR COMPANY

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER.....	9
II. CATHERINE OF SIENA—Saint and Suffragist	29
III. FRANCIS OF ASSISI—Saint and Social Reformer	47
IV. JOAN OF ARC—Saint and Patriot.....	65
V. IGNATIUS LOYOLA — Saint and Empire-Builder	81
VI. VINCENT DE PAUL—Saint and Founder of Modern Philanthropy	99
VII. THE APOLOGY OF WORKS.....	117

PREFACE

DR. ROSS'S "Talks on Sanctity and Social Service" call attention with striking effect to a vital problem of the Christian life that too few of us master—that of reconciling thorough piety with an active life; sincere interest in the things of God with honest and effective attention to things of earth.

The Saints selected as subjects of these addresses, like any other Saints, lived a rich supernatural life in which the deeper tendencies of piety were made manifest. They sought communion with God, they loved and practised prayer unceasingly. They accepted the graces that transformed them, and in this way they are a revelation of the things of the soul.

But they saw that work was to be done in the world. Their vision of God guided them to it. Their love of souls gave sympathy with weakness around them, and they discovered the secret of being busy with God and at the same time busy with the children of God in their worldly affairs.

We in this twentieth century have grave need of the example and inspiration of the Saints. We meet practical persons who relegate the Saints to

PREFACE

the category of the superfluous. We meet many who speak disparagingly of the Saints and know nothing about them. We meet many who aim to do noble things for others but fail to associate their piety with service as Christians should. If all such will read these sketches by Dr. Ross, they will gratefully discover that God has not asked the impossible of the Saints or of us, and that we cannot gain the one true vision of life and its complex duties except as we see all in relation to God. The understanding of the Saints is passport to imitation of them. They are, without exception, devoted unremittingly to prayer. We should go to them in simple trust and seek the secrets that guided them.

Dr. Ross offers in these Talks the guidance of one familiar with the history of the Saints and with the demands of a busy life. The sketches are written with understanding and sympathy. They may be commended with cordial good will to all.

WILLIAM J. KERBY,
The Catholic University of America.

I

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

In a desert land, and where there is no way, and no water: so in the sanctuary have I come before Thee, to see Thy power and Thy glory. (Psalm lxii, 3.)

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

WHEN we contemplate the universality of that religious zeal which drew thousands from the elegance and comforts of society to sequestered solitude and austere maceration; when we behold the greatest and wisest of mankind the dupes of a fatal delusion, and even the miser expending his store to partake in the felicity of mortified ascetics; again, when we find the tide of enthusiasm subsided and sober reason recovered from her delirium and endeavoring, as it were, to demolish every vestige of her former frenzy, we have a concise sketch of the history of monachism, and no common instance of that mental weakness and versatility which stamp the character of frailty on the human species.”¹

So wrote a very respectable and respected historian. And he is not alone in such an opinion. Many there are who look upon all mystics as social drones, making no return to society; who consider all asceticism, all self-denial, all mortification as religious

¹ Mervye Archdall, *Monasticon Hibernicum*, p. ix, quoted by Wm. Cobbett, “History of the Protestant Reformation,” p. 108, New York, n.d.

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

morbidity; who believe that all retirement from the world, as it is called, is criminal neglect of social duties.

Such criticism comes from two entirely distinct sources: the good, honest, unselfish workers; and the selfish, sensuous, hypocritical carpers.

There are those who quarrel with this spirit of sanctity because they instinctively feel that it is higher and nobler than their own yielding to the lure of sense. They are not themselves devoting their whole lives to unselfish, altruistic work for others, they are as self-centred as the most egoistic anchorite who has only his own company all day long. But they feel that Mary has really chosen the better part, and they are restive under the implied criticism of themselves. Down in their innermost souls they realize that their own feverish seeking of the things of sense makes but a sorry figure beside this unearthly conquering of the body's fondest longings, and so, like dogs in the manger, they wish to keep these higher natures from attaining what they themselves will not seek.

For such characters, marriage is but a prostitution of God's Sacrament to selfish ends. They refuse the dignity of parenthood because of its burdens, yet they condemn celibacy as anti-social; they oppress their employees and will stoop to any means

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

to turn a penny, yet call the voluntary poverty of Religious economically unsound; they disregard laws, corrupt courts, bribe justice, yet self-righteously call obedience to a religious superior treachery to the civil authority.

We need not delay in considering this class of critics. It is rather a compliment to be made the target of their complaints. They are the kind of people whose enmity we prefer to their friendship.

But there are others whose attitude of opposition is dictated by the noblest of motives—by a sincere attempt to fulfill the second of the two greatest commandments. They are possessed by an ungovernable energy forcing them into active work to ameliorate conditions. They cannot sit with folded hands and watch the powers of evil eating into the Kingdom of God on earth. They must be up and doing every moment, and to the best of their ability they are living up to the injunction: “Watch, therefore, for you know not when the Lord of the house cometh.” (Mark xiii, 35.)

We cannot so legitimately brush aside the objections of this noble army of investigators and laborers. Though dedicating their lives to the material uplift of their fellowmen, they are not purely materialistic. They wish his intellectual, esthetic, spiritual elevation, too, and themselves are splendid

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

examples of untiring, unselfish, unrewarded toil for others.

In a way, we sympathize with them. To some extent, indeed, we judge by the same standard. Ours also is an empirical, pragmatic rule—without the evil connotation these words sometimes have. Did not Christ say, “By their fruits you shall know them?” (Matt. vii, 16.) Has not St. John given us this very criterion when he declares: “In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil. Whosoever is not just is not of God, nor he that loveth not his neighbor?” (I John iii, 10.) And again in the same Epistle he says: “If any man say, I love God, and hateth his brother: he is a liar, for he that loveth not his brother, whom he seeth, how can he love God whom he seeth not?” (iv, 20.) St. James has told us in unmistakable language that faith without good works is dead and that the works must be partly at least in the service of our neighbor. “Religion pure and undefiled before God the Father is this—to visit the fatherless and the widows in their distress, and to keep one’s self unspotted from this world.” (i, 27.)

Saints other than the Apostles, too, all down the centuries have stressed this point. Has not Catherine of Siena told us that Christ in His revelations to her frequently insisted that there is only one way

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

to God—through service to our fellowman?² And even such a great contemplative as St. Teresa asserts that the *surest* sign for discovering whether we love God is to love our neighbor.³ One might almost think that a modern social worker had written these words of the great Carmelite: “When I see souls so very careful about being attentive at their prayers, and about understanding them also, so that it seems they dare not so much as stir or divert their thoughts, lest they should lose the little pleasure and devotion they feel in their prayer, I then clearly discover how little they understand the way by which they may arrive at union, because they suppose that all the business consists in this. No! sisters, no! Our Lord desires *works*. If then you see a sister sick, whom you can in any way relieve, never fear you will lose your devotion if you sympathize wth her; if she be in pain, grieve with her, and, if necessary, fast, that so she may have something to eat.”⁴

Apparently, therefore, we have, at least in part, the same standards as the big-hearted, self-sacrificing philanthropists of today. It is a standard of results, of Good Samaritanism to our neighbors.

Are we, too, then, to condemn asceticism and

² “Dialogue,” translated by Algar Thorold, London, 1896, *passim*.

³ “Interior Castle,” Mansion V, Ch. III, No. 9.

⁴ *Ibid.*, No. 13.

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

the religious life? Is the Church of the present going to say that there is no longer room or need for the lover of solitude and retirement? that such patterns of virtue are not suited to our day, no matter what they may have been before? Are the ideals of immolation to be cast on the scrap-heap of worn-out superstitions? Are our monasteries to be closed or changed into social settlements?

By no means. There are many good reasons justifying the practises of the Saints. And not least among them is this very consideration of practical service to humanity. In serving their fellowmen those achieve most who have attained a unity of life, a fixity of purpose, by communion with the Source of all life and energy. John R. Mott, whose results in the active life will hardly be questioned by anyone, recognized this when he wrote of the Protestant Churches: "An alarming weakness among Christians is that we are producing Christian activities faster than we are producing Christian experience and Christian faith; that the discipline of our souls and the deepening of our acquaintance with God are not sufficiently thorough to enable us to meet the unprecedented expansion of opportunity and responsibility of our generation."⁶

⁶ Preface to "The Meaning of Prayer," by Harry Emerson Fosdick, N. Y., 1919.

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

Taking the criterion of our critics, then, we shall find ample ground for sanctioning these usages so fostered by the age-old Church, so rooted in her traditions as to be almost a part of her doctrine. The reconciliation can be made, I think, if we can bring ourselves to recognize a very important law of progress—that advance is often, perhaps always, preceded by some sort of retrogression. The earth leaves the source of its heat to become hotter; we are some three million miles further from the sun in June than in December. Out of life comes corruption that there may be life more abundant; the seed dies to live again in the fruit. An engine stalled upon an upgrade may have to back before it can get momentum enough to reach the summit. To go backward is sometimes the only way of getting forward.

Looking at our own lives, do we not see that whatever progress we have made has been by a succession of goings forward and backward, rather than steadily along a continuous straight line? As Professor James put it, we learn to skate in the summer and to swim in the winter. After a certain rest—a complete abandonment of our former course of action—we come back to it with greater capacity than if we had kept on continuously.

And if we do not make this alternation deliberately,

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

nature frequently makes it for us. When we have advanced a certain distance from a particular state, we find ourselves gradually approaching it again, to renew it approximately. Our lives run in cycles, though not exact ones, and not exact duplicates of each other. We are like persons mounting to a tower by a spiral staircase. As we start on one side of the tower, we gradually ascend step by step until we are on the opposite side, representing an entirely different condition of soul. But as we continue to go on, we come to be directly above the starting point, representing an approximate duplication of our original state. Yet when we were on the other side, apparently far away, we had made an advance, and the condition of our further advance is to repeat that seeming retrogression, that movement in a direction so far away from our aim.

Thus our lives are passed in this oscillation from one condition to another, advancing in cycles or cycloids. We are worldly and otherworldly, spiritual and sensuous, selfish and unselfish by turns that seem to be governed by some sort of law. Yet may we not hope that the third period of worldliness is an advance upon the first period of spirituality, and, perhaps, in some mysterious way has brought us closer to the crown and apex of our efforts, though seemingly so distant?

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

One of the great modern philosophers has taken this conception of all progress consisting of advance, retreat, victory; of birth, death, rebirth; of affirmation, negation, confirmation—and worked it out with exceeding minuteness. Every idea, he says, implies its contrary, and only the two together can give the complete concept; every action produces a reaction, and both are essential for full fruition; for every thesis there is an antithesis, and both are necessary for the complete and final synthesis.

You will see now the idea I wish to drive home—that the retirement of the Saint is not to be considered by itself, it is not its own end, but simply the antithesis (in Hegel's sense) of social activity, a preparation for a fuller, completer, intenser labor afterwards. The Christian mystics, says Delacroix, proceed from the Finite to the Infinite and back again to the Definite; “they aspire to infinitize life and to define Infinity; they go from the conscious to the subconscious and from the subconscious to the conscious. The obstacle to their path is not consciousness in general, but *self*-consciousness, the consciousness of the Ego.”⁶

As St. Thomas tells us, the highest perfection of

⁶ H. Delacroix, “Essai sur le Mysticisme Spéculatif en Allemagne au XIV Siècle,” Paris, 1900, p. 235; quoted by Underhill, “Mysticism,” New York, 1912, p. 208.

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

a being is to be the cause of other beings.⁷ When we find a sterile passivity, we are in the presence of the quietistic heresy, not of true sanctity. Hugh of St. Victor, in his analysis of the spiritual life, made all the stages simply preparatory to the last which he called "spiritual fruitfulness."⁸ St. Teresa tells us that for the soul to give perfect hospitality to Christ, Mary and Martha must unite, the spirit of retirement and society, contemplation and activity.⁹

This kind of retirement, which reinforces activity instead of making mere passivity its goal, is essential to Christian mysticism and marks it off from other forms. Christianity is not an Eastern fatalism, an introspective Buddhism making annihilation the supreme end of man. Even Professor Mecklin, a somewhat unsympathetic critic of sainthood, admits that "the Church never allowed the saint to break with the social order and thus cease to be socially valuable."¹⁰

All the records of the Church's Saints—"the red-blooded saints," as Mecklin calls them—are records of tremendous human activity. They are the history

⁷ "Contra Gentiles," lib. III, cap. XXL.

⁸ "De Quatuor Gradibus Violentæ Charitatis," Migne, P. L., Vol. 196, Col. 1207, and especially Col. 1216 D.

⁹ "Interior Castle," Mansion VII, Ch. IV.

¹⁰ John M. Mecklin, "The Passing of the Saint," *Internat. Journal of Sociology*, January, 1919, p. 362.

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

of astute organizers, such as Ignatius Loyola; of philanthropists, such as Catherine of Genoa and Vincent de Paul; of missionaries and founders of civilization, such as Boniface and Patrick and Xavier; and, finally, of some peculiarly strong souls whose life of unitive prayer has forced upon them a national destiny, such as St. Bernard, St. Catherine of Siena, and Joan of Arc.

“Utterly remade in the interests of Reality, exhibiting that dual condition of fruition and activity which Ruysbroeck described as the crowning stage of human evolution, ‘the supreme summit of the Inner Life,’¹¹ all those lived, as it were, with both hands; towards the finite and towards the Infinite, towards God and man. It is true that in nearly every case such ‘great actives’ have first left the world as a necessary condition of obtaining contact with the Absolute Life which reinforced their own, for a mind districted by the many cannot apprehend the One. Hence the solitude of the wilderness is an essential part of the mystical education. But having attained that contact, established themselves upon transcendent levels —being united with their Source not merely in temporary ecstasies, but by an act of complete surren-

¹¹ “L’Ornement des Noces Spirituelles,” L. II, Cap. LXXIII.

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

der—they were impelled to abandon their solitude, and resumed in some way their contact with the world in order to become the medium whereby that life flowed out to other men. To go up alone into the mountain and come back an ambassador to the world, has ever been the method of humanity's best friends. This systole and diastole motion of retreat as the preliminary to a return remains the true ideal of Christian Mysticism in its highest level. Those in whom it is not found, however great in other respects, must be considered as having stopped short of the final stage.”¹²

It is true that many may stop short of the final goal. They may die in their retirement before the moment for action comes, or they may mistake the ease and peace and security of such a life for an end in itself. And let us admit frankly that the spirituality of many people is merely a cloak for laziness. They are good, but good for nothing. Their goodness is negative. They prefer to spend a long time in a quiet chapel comfortably musing, rather than hustling to help their neighbors. It is easier. Everyone knows this type of gentle “good” person wrapped up in spiritual selfishness. They are very sweet-tempered, yet unbendingly obstinate. The convenience of others, obvious duties, the plain

¹² “Mysticism,” p. 209ff.

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

call of charity, must all give way to their own spiritual comfort.

But these people do not destroy the truth insisted on by so many of the Saints themselves and exhibited to us in the supreme Model of our lives—that the ideal of our existence is work, work, work. There is a talent, a genius for sanctity as for any other vocation, and as we do not condemn all artists because of many mediocre daubers, nor all poets because of many rhymsters, so we should not condemn all Saints because of the many who make profession of the calling without the ability to reach its objects.

Even those, however, who do not attain the highest stage of fruition may yet, in a way, be necessary for the production of the highest types. The poetasters are indispensable for the poets, a mass of ordinary music-lovers demand the genius composer, a host of gallery gods call forth a Shakespeare.

And the small souls living in retirement, not big enough for the great final act, are probably in a stage ahead of what they would be if working feverishly for others according to materialistic standards. Their retrogression is only apparent. They have advanced from the thesis to the antithesis; they have achieved that peace and unity of

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

soul so absolutely necessary as a foundation for intensest and fruitfullest activity. Even though they do not reach the synthesis, even though they fail of attaining the height and crown of all, they have justified their own retirement and have pointed the way to others. And we who are still so far below are in no position to criticize them.

Rather we should strive humbly and sincerely to imitate them. Remember what was recommended to us by that prince of pragmatists, Prof. James, in his lecture on "The Value of Saintliness": "In a general way, and 'on the whole,' our abandonment of theological criteria, and our testing of religion by practical common sense and the empirical method, leave it in possession of its towering place in history. Economically, the saintly group of qualities is indispensable to the world's welfare. The great saints are immediate successes; the smaller ones are at least heralds and harbingers, and they may be leaven also, of a better mundane order. Let us be Saints, then, if we can, whether or not we succeed visibly and temporarily."¹⁸

The great Saints are worldly successes, and they are successes because of their sanctity. Over-materialistic critics may say that they succeed in

¹⁸ Wm. James, "The Varieties of Religious Experience," New York, 1903, p. 377.

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

spite of their hours given to prayer, in spite of their ill-health induced by mortification, in spite of the handicaps a man who forms his life upon the beatitudes is under in dealing with men who recognize no such impossible standard. Such critics claim that had the Saints done none of these things, they would have succeeded even more remarkably. Being in the realm of the hypothetical, neither side can prove its case exactly. But we have heard what Professor James, who cannot be accused of prejudice in favor of religion, and who has examined this question with painstaking thoroughness, has to say in favor of prayer. And better witnesses than Professor James are the Saints themselves. They who should know more than anyone else of the mainsprings of their accomplishments, attribute their success to the fact that God is acting through them, and that by prayer and mortification they have attained an intimate union with Him.

Where did St. Paul, an obscure and hated Jew, ugly, frail, and sickly, get the power to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles and singlehanded distinctly to foreshadow the universal spread of the colossal Catholic Church, when an Emperor Julian with all the wealth and power and position of a mighty sovereign could not make the old-established traditional religion even hold its own? Surely it must have

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

been largely from that divine ravishment on the road to Damascus, and from the months of contemplation he afterwards spent in the silence of Arabia. Saul retired into the desert before Paul preached in the city.

Whence came the power of an unknown peasant girl to rout the chivalry of England and win back France when all her warriors were powerless? From the long, silent communings with the Supernatural that she enjoyed while tending her father's sheep. The peaceful stillness of a village church had made this girl a better soldier than all the knights cradled in arms and brought up in the din and dust of battle.

What was the secret of that frail, poetic-looking ecstatic of Assisi, that men did his simplest bidding and flocked after him in thousands, that he could cope with Innocent the Great while Frederick Barbarossa was humbled to the dust? It was long meditation before the crucifix at San Damiano and the ineffable experience of La Verna.

How came it that Catherine of Siena, the illiterate daughter of a dyer, was the adviser of kings and pontiffs, and accomplished what the most astute politicians had failed to do? It was because she had spent three years in the cell of self-knowledge, perfecting her union with God.

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

Napoleon, "the titanic charioteer of destiny," proved to be only a Phaeton who could not hold the reins of power even during his own lifetime; Cromwell's glory slipped from the nerveless grasp of his son; the empire that the sovereign of Ignatius fought for at Pampeluna has faded like autumn leaves; but the tremendous international power that Ignatius himself established is still the bugbear of Bismarcks and Clemenceaus, Voltaires and Cavaours. And why? Because in his silent meditations in the cave at Manresa he had made contact with the Omnipotent.

And so we are forced back upon a great paradox of our existence: death is the condition of more abundant life, whether spiritual or material. This seeming loss, this apparent retrogression, must precede real progress; if we are to have the synthesis we must bear with the antithesis. For the highest social activity we must be re-made on supernatural lines, we must re-enter the darkness and inactivity of the womb to be re-born, we must reach the brotherhood of man through the Fatherhood of God, through contact with the Absolute and Eternal in the silence of the soul, in the stillness of the desert, where the noises of the city are hushed and quieted.

Shall we not make a practical test of this law? Shall we not besides defending those called to a

ACTIVITY THE GOAL OF PRAYER

special life of retirement, also in our own degree undergo this figurative death that we may be re-born greater and better and purer? Can we not secure one hour from the twenty-four for silent converse with God, for a striving after contact with the Divine? We pray now, it is true, but how distractedly, how thoughtlessly. Our religion is so external, so much a matter of habit. Let us try to spiritualize it, to make it live, to bring ourselves slowly to a vivid realization of the supernatural, a breathing of the atmosphere of Heaven, a personal direct union with the Godhead. And doing this our own lives will be the best apology for the traditions of sanctity that the Church has clung to through persecution and flattery, through poverty and wealth, no less than through a pagan Renaissance and a materialized modernity.

II

CATHERINE OF SIENA—SAINT AND SUFFRAGIST

With thy comeliness and thy beauty set out, proceed prosperously, and reign. Because of truth and meekness and justice: and thy right hand shall conduct thee wonderfully.
(Psalm xliv, 5.)

CATHERINE OF SIENA—SAINT AND SUFFRAGIST

“**I** CAN defend myself from my enemies,” said an English wit, “but may the Lord protect me from my friends.” The worst enemies of the Saints have been their sentimental admirers. It was not the Agnostic, it was not the Iconoclast, it was not the Protestant who made Saints seem colorless imbeciles. Why is it that sanctity and weakness are synonymous in the minds of so many? Why is it that “Saint” before a man’s name conjures up the picture of an effeminate youth with eyes cast down and absolutely no manliness? It is because a certain type of false friend has robbed the Saints of their humanity in order to give them his own foolish and vapid conception of the qualities of supermen.

Upon this very point read one of the greatest authorities on the lives of the Saints, the scholarly Fr. Delehaye, a Jesuit and a Bollandist: “To enumerate the chief errors committed by the biographers of the Saints would be a tiresome task. No species of literature is more frequently attempted without preparation. And though it may be true that the good will of the author suffices to please the Saints, it is less true that nothing else is neces-

CATHERINE OF SIENA

sary worthily to praise them. Unfortunately the biographers of the Saints have sinned much, and the only consolation is that much will be forgiven them.”¹

Art and literature have united in distorting our idea of the Saints. We are apt to look upon the Saints as a row of solemn, stupid figures in stilted attitudes of prayer, because some mediocre artist has so represented them. Or a crudely realistic presentation of some mystical experience in their lives has so fixed itself in our imagination that it accompanies all our thinking of the Saints.

But when we once get behind this wrapper with which an indiscreet piety has surrounded the Saints, we find them to be real, wide-awake, lovable human beings. Instead of the lifeless dolls their would-be reverent friends have made them, they are the most striking personalities of their age. They are the strongest, bravest, clearest-visioned souls the world has seen.

It was a Saint who scattered social settlements—for we may very truly call the monasteries social settlements—throughout the wildest parts of Europe and finally tamed the savage hordes that

¹ “Les Légendes Hagiographiques” par Hippolyte Delehaye, S.J., Bollandiste: Bruxelles, Société des Bollandistes, 1905, p. 241.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

threatened the destruction of everything gained through centuries of Roman civilization; it was a Saint who healed the feuds of medieval life and re-taught us the brotherhood of man; it was a Saint who closed the Babylonian captivity and recreated Rome; it was a Saint who did what French kings and Spanish emperors with all the force of arms could not do—turned back the Protestant Revolution.

And of all the remarkable Saints, few are more striking than Catherine of Siena; and few exhibit more clearly the law insisted upon previously, that retirement and self-conquest by mortification are a necessary preparation for the highest social service. How was it that an obscure artisan's daughter became the counsellor of kings and pontiffs, princes and cardinals? How was it that cities petitioned for her presence while alive and fought for her body when dead? How was it that this gentle, lovable woman, before equal suffrage was heard of, exercised a political power that any of her present-day sisters might reasonably envy?

It was because she had retired from the world before she tried to save it. She had spent years in silent meditation before she advanced with any theory of political salvation. She had undergone hunger, not in a prison, but in her own little cell

CATHERINE OF SIENA

in Strada del Oca. The political powers with which she had to contend were absolutely unscrupulous; the mobs she braved were without respect for man or woman, yet she conquered—not by militant methods, but by the force of that reborn life she had obtained in quiet and retirement. She could unite others and bend them to her will, because she had first achieved that peace and unity of soul which the world cannot give, and had first bent her own will to that of Christ in loving contemplation, in mystic marriage.

Catherine of Siena was born of obscure parents, the youngest of twenty-five children. Until her twentieth year she lived a life of extreme mortification and strict solitude. For three years she spoke only to her confessor. "Gradually abstaining from one thing after another," says Gardner, who is not a Catholic, "Catherine freed herself from all dependence on food or sleep."² Her chief sustenance was the Holy Eucharist. Three hours sufficed for sleep. So thirsty was she for mortification, that she cried out in the excess of her love: "I wish pains to be food to me, tears my drink, and sweat my ointment. Let pains make me fat, let pains cure me, let pains give me light, let pains give me wisdom, let pains

² "St. Catherine of Siena," N. Y., 1907, p. 12.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

clothe my nakedness, let pains strip me of all self-live, spiritual and temporal.”³ “Thus Catherine became one of those Saints,” adds Gardner, “horrible and repulsive to the eyes of many in an age that worships material gain and physical comfort, who have offered themselves as a sacrifice to the Eternal Justice for the sins of the world.”⁴

Strange preparation for one who was going to mix in cities as turbulent as revolutionary Russia. Strange education for one who was to be the correspondent of the rulers of Europe. But Catherine knew better than the children of this generation, that the race is not to the swift nor the battle to the strong, and the after event has proved the wisdom of her course.

Her time of preparation over, Catherine took up the active work as if she had been doing it all her life.

“Then in her sacred saving hands
She took the sorrows of the lands,
With maiden palms she lifted up
The sick time’s blood-embittered cup,
And in her virgin garment furled
The faint limbs of a wounded world.
Clothed with calm love and clear desire,
She went forth in her soul’s attire,
A missive fire.”

—Swinburne, “Songs before Sunrise.”

³ “St. Catherine of Siena as Seen in Her Letters,” edited by Vida D. Scudder, N. Y., p. 231.

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 13.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

As she said in one of her letters, "to show the love we have for Him [God] we ought to serve and love every rational creature. . . . Seeing ourselves loved we cannot do otherwise than love. . . . So thou seest that we conceive virtues through God and bring them to birth for our neighbor."⁸ Urged on by this love kindled in her meditations, Catherine visited the poor, nursed the sick, distributed alms. During the plague which carried off eighty thousand of the inhabitants of Siena, she lovingly and fearlessly ministered to thousands.

Such conduct did not escape criticism. There were those who shook their heads at this young woman's going about a city alone and attending to all sorts of people; there were those who thought that the ecclesiastical authorities should force her to live in a convent if she would not do it of her own free will. Catherine had to face the same sort of opposition that her sisters of a generation ago faced before achieving the opportunity for higher education; the same sort of opposition, only intensified, that her sisters faced today in winning equal political rights.

But the charm of her character, the unselfishness

⁸ Scudder, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

of her service, the irresistible charity she had won by long months of silent communion with the God of love, finally conquered. Gradually a band of devoted followers gathered around her, ready to do her every bidding. Young men from the noblest families of Italy and the best universities of Europe acted as her secretaries. Her own college of retirement and mortification had not taught her to write, so she dictated hundreds of letters. They have become a classic of the Italian tongue, a treasury of history, an inspiration to spiritual endeavor. They are wonderfully impassioned entreaties to persons in all ranks to cease strife, to love God, to acknowledge the brotherhood of man.

Catherine, however, did not stop in the narrow circle of her own city. She was doing wonderful charitable work there, in a remedial way, but she saw that the task was hopeless unless she could get down to the political roots of these evils. If this were not done, there would be a constant supply of misery and degradation that no city could deal with effectively. The sight that met her eyes as she rose to a broad view of the situation was enough to appal the stoutest hearted. Catherine lived in an age of "steel and velvet"—of fiercely cruel wars and childlike gaiety, of wonderful faith and frightful sin, of generous charity and unpardonable luxury.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

Humanity was divided against itself. Italy was split up into dozens of petty states and overrun by "free companies" selling themselves to the highest bidder. Each state, moreover, was separated between various families at bitter feud with one another. Scheming French monarchs had moved the papacy from Rome to Avignon; the cardinals were mostly French, and the Pope himself was a French subject. Scarcely ever have the world and the Church seen a darker day. Probably we should have to go to Bolshevik Russia to find a parallel, and indeed some of the Italian republics had a government somewhat resembling that of the soviets. Compared with that time our own United States is a paradise—economically, politically, religiously.

And how did Catherine face all this? Squarely and honestly. She called a spade a spade, and her denunciation of licentiousness, wherever found, is startlingly frank. There was no shutting of eyes, no mincing of words. The dyer's daughter wrote thus vigorously to Pope Gregory about himself: "The sick man is blind, for he knows not his own need; and the pastor, who is the physician, is blind, for he considers nothing save his own pleasure and advantage. . . . Such a one is truly a hireling shepherd, because not only does he not draw his little sheep out of the hand of the wolf, but he

CATHERINE OF SIENA

himself devours them; and the cause of all this is that he loves himself without God, and does not follow sweet Jesus, the true shepherd, who has given His life for His sheep.”*

But plainly as Catherine wrote to the highest ecclesiastical authorities, there was no faltering in loyalty to the Church of Christ, to the See of Peter. Her idea of peace and perfection was as much higher than ours as were her intellectual force and spiritual gifts, yet she bore with humble resignation conditions tremendously worse than those which sometimes shake our confidence.

Catherine saw the evils of the day clearly, she fought those evils boldly and openly, but also she heard the voice of the Bridegroom saying to her: “Sweetest my daughter, thou seest how the Church has soiled her face with impurities and self-love, and grown puffed up by the pride and avarice of those who feed at her bosom. But take thy tears and thy sweats, drawing them from the fountain of My divine charity, and cleanse her face. For I promise thee that her beauty shall be restored to her not by the sword, nor cruelty, nor by war, but by peace, and by humble and continual prayer, tears and sweats poured forth from the grieving desires

* Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 154.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

of My servants. So shall thy desires be fulfilled in long abiding, and My Providence shall in no wise fail.”⁷

And Catherine did take her tears and sweats to cleanse the face of the Bride of Christ. She spent her days in work for others, her nights in prayer. For thirteen years she was writing and travelling incessantly. If you look over the list of her letters you will be surprised not only at their abiding interest, but at their number and the personages to whom they are addressed—to the King of France, to the Queen of Naples, to the Pope of Rome, to saints and sinners, to solitaries and to soldiers, to Religious and to women of the world.

When Pope Gregory XI declared war against Milan, and took into his pay the famous English freebooter, Sir John Hawkwood, Catherine was in correspondence both with Sir John and with the papal envoys. In the interests of peace she visited Pisa, Lucca, Florence, and other Italian cities. Before she was thirty her power and influence had so far increased that Florence appointed her as a special ambassador to Gregory to secure favorable terms. The Pope entrusted her with the negotia-

⁷ “Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena,” N. Y., 1907, p. 73; cf. Scudder, pp. 14-15.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

tions, but the Florentines afterwards failed to ratify her powers.

Though thwarted in this direction, she was not discouraged. She did not retire into her former seclusion. The drive of love still urged her to give herself unreservedly to the service of others, and she turned herself eagerly to the bigger field of world politics.

Ever since the days of the Roman dominion a sense of unity had possessed Europe; and when the resurrection of the Holy Roman Empire failed, the idealists of the day turned with greater earnestness to the Pope as the only stable and legitimate center of union. To accomplish this, however, it was essential that the Supreme Pontiff should not be dominated by any one temporal sovereign; and the first task was to release him from the clutches of France. For seventy years the Pope had been a willing dweller in the fair land of the troubadours, and the work of getting him back to Rome had baffled the wisest and the most powerful politicians of the time. Arrayed against any such movement was the King of France and almost every cardinal. Charles V hated to see his hold on the papacy loosened; the cardinals, largely French, were too happy in fruitful Provence to long for the comparative dullness and desolation of Rome.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

Such were the difficulties that confronted Catherine, and she attacked them with indomitable courage. Her tremendous spiritual force conquered. She persuaded Gregory of the wisdom of returning to Rome, and she held that resolution like flint against all the intrigues of those whose interests lay another way. "Up, manfully, Father!" she wrote. "For I tell you you have no need to fear. . . . And if any of your household strive to impede you, say to them boldly what Christ said to Peter. . . . Get thee behind me, Satan."⁸

It is hard to realize the magnitude and importance of Gregory's return to Rome. To Italy it signified the return of Rome to a metropolitan position, a source of unity and strength to the whole peninsula. And to Christendom in general it meant the freeing of this power from vassalage to France and the making it once more independent and international.

How stupendous was the task may to some extent be grasped if we visualize it under contemporary conditions. Imagine an American woman without education, money, or social position persuading Benedict XV to leave one country and locate in another; imagine her overcoming the opposition of the Italian cardinals; conceive of her by pure force

⁸ Gardner, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

of will reorganizing that governing body of the Church, making it over from an almost exclusively Latin college into an assembly of Germans or Americans. Yet not until someone accomplishes this Herculean undertaking will Catherine's feat be duplicated. For she found the Pope in Avignon under the domination of France; she placed him in Rome free and independent. She found the College of Cardinals predominantly French; she left it, as it has been ever since, largely Italian. She found a vacillating, weak-willed pontiff; she left a Pope with a will of iron.

Scarcely had Gregory been established in Rome, however, when Catherine had to go to Florence to quell a revolt against the papal power. After marvelously escaping death at the hands of a furious mob, she finally succeeded in getting the interdict respected. Peace was concluded a year later by Urban, Gregory's successor, and Catherine returned to Rome. Here she settled an insurrection of the townspeople against Urban and devoted her last months to attempts to heal the schism caused by Urban's overbearing manner and ill-considered reforms. She died before the schism was healed, but not before she had achieved an enduring place in history as one of the few women who have exerted political influence by force of intellect instead of by

CATHERINE OF SIENA

feminine charms; not before she had given ample proof of the usefulness and necessity, even judging from a "practical" and pragmatic standpoint, of asceticism and solitude as a preparation for the highest social activity.

"Nearly four hundred of Catherine's letters have been preserved to us. . . . Her correspondents include a Romagnole mendicant in Florence, a Jewish usurer in Padua, no less than two sovereign pontiffs and three kings. Leaders of armies, rulers of Italian republics, receive her burning words and bow to her inspired will, no less than private citizens seeking her counsel in the spiritual life, and simple monks and hermits in their cells striving to find the way to perfection. She can warn a queen: 'instead of a woman, you have become the servant and slave of nothingness, making yourself the subject of lies and of the demon who is their father'; while she bids the wife of a tailor: 'clothe yourself in the royal virtues.' Her wonderful, all-embracing, intuitive sympathy knows no barriers, but penetrates into the house of shame as well as into the monastery."⁹

Catherine of Siena died at thirty-three. Twenty of these years she spent in retirement. Yet she accomplished more in a little over a decade than do

⁹ Gardner, p. 373.

CATHERINE OF SIENA

most of those who condemn solitude as useless—more even than they attempt. Where can we find in the gospels of work and success a career to match this; where can we find, from a worldly point of view, a more striking example of triumph over adverse circumstances? Here is a young woman of obscure birth, no education, no money, who, living in an age when women had fewer rights and opportunities than now, became the pacifier of Italy, the restorer of Rome, the adviser of kings, the counsellor of pontiffs. And what was the secret of her success? It was the all-powerful love she had kindled in those years of retirement and mortification before beginning her public career; it was that she watched and prayed before she labored and worked; it was that she retired into the desert before preaching in the city.

When are we going to realize the universality of that law exemplified in Catherine's life? When are we going to understand that it applies to us as to her? When are we going to convince ourselves that our active life will be the better and fuller the deeper our spirituality? Time spent in prayer is not time lost for the doctor or lawyer or teacher. Success in any branch depends, after all, upon character, and what greater source of character can there be than the Source of all life? Strive for con-

CATHERINE OF SIENA

tact with the Godhead, for union with the Creator, and your efforts will be rewarded a hundredfold. From now on, let no day pass without its portion of appointed prayer—not a thoughtless mumbling of formulas known by rote, but a conscious converse with the Deity. Persevere until you too, like Henoch, can walk with God, until you have renewed your strength at the Fountain of Living Waters, until you have shared the power of the Omnipotent.

III

FRANCIS OF ASSISI—SAINT AND SOCIAL REFORMER

Blessed is the man that is found without blemish ; and that hath not gone after gold, nor put his trust in money nor in treasures. Who is he, and we will praise him ? For he hath done wonderful things in his life. (*Ecclesiasticus, xxxi, 8-9.*)

FRANCIS OF ASSISI—SAINT AND SOCIAL REFORMER

PAUL SABATIER, a French Protestant clergyman, was led in rather an odd way to write a life of St. Francis. He was returning one day from the little town of Assisi in a carriage with an ardent free-thinker. His companion enquired, sneeringly, if he had secured any relics. Sabatier replied that he had visited Assisi more for the sake of Giotto's frescoes than for Francis. To his surprise, his companion then launched into an enthusiastic panegyric of the Saint, and among other things called him one of the greatest social reformers that ever lived. For the first time, Sabatier understood that Francis was the real attraction, not the art which had collected round him, and he made a profound and critical study of this "Troubadour of God."

After making all due allowance for pious exaggeration, after subtracting all that impartial scholarship demands, he still found in St. Francis one of the heroes of the world, an epoch-making character comparable to the greatest in history. How large he looms can be gathered from the varied bodies that have claimed him for their own.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

Protestants have called him a precursor of Luther, a preparer of the way for the Reformation three centuries later. Socialists revere him as one of their own leaders. And Catholics, of course, have given him the highest title obtainable by man—Saint.

We are not here concerned with Francis as a religious reformer. The object of these talks is to justify saintship from a practical, worldly stand-point; and for that reason we limit our study of our Saint's influence to the political and social sphere. In twenty short years this mystic and ecstatic accomplished more in this field than have even the greatest of so-called practical men. He died when forty-four years old, yet he has left behind him a name that will never die.

Francis was not one of those who was born a saint or had sanctity thrust upon him. His father was a well-to-do merchant, and as far as we can gather Francis lived a life very similar to that of a young man of our day who has a big bank account to draw on. Apparently he was as thorough in his pleasure-seeking as he was afterwards in his God-seeking. At any rate, overmuch gaiety with the youths of the town landed him sick in bed, and ultimately changed the current of his activity. In the enforced retirement of the sick room, he learned to look upon life differently. Even after recovering

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

he did not regain his former cheerfulness. His zest for life was gone, and he sank into despondency. The old interests no longer appealed, the old companions no longer satisfied. He was alone with his own soul. A dryness, a tastelessness, an overpowering ennui oppressed him. For three years he bore the hardest of all trials—failure of creatures and apparent desertion by God.

But such desertion is only apparent, and Francis found God at last. And when he had found God, he found creatures, too, but transfigured. Once more they could charm and delight him. He called the wolf brother and the moon sister; he preached to the birds of the air and to the fishes of the sea. No man was too low in the world's estimation, too poor and afflicted, too sinful for him to recognize his brotherhood. Francis loved every man with a pure, clean, life-giving affection. There were no evil consequences to that love founded on communion with God. It did not leave behind a trail of broken hearts, discarded mistresses, bastard children. Francis loved, but he loved unselfishly, with the disciplined heart of an ascetic. He loved, not to use the objects of his love for a few months of selfish gratification, but in order to bring them nearer to God.

The life of Francis of Assisi demonstrates once

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

more that the sanest and safest foundation for the brotherhood of man is the fatherhood of God. Because of his intimate union with Our Father Who is in Heaven, he loved man and the most loathsome of men in and for God. And though in his relations with the Lady Claire and with Brother Jacoba there was a personal element lacking in the universal affection he extended to all creatures, perfectly did Francis fulfill the injunction of Patmore:

"Lest sacred love your soul ensnare,
With pious fancy still infer
How loving and how lovely fair
Must He be Who hath fashioned her."

Out of this ardent, all-embracing love there grew one of the most important social reforms of modern times. Most recent medical advances are insignificant beside it, though they have received greater praise. A monument has been erected to the memory of the man who allowed mosquitoes to bite him in order to prove a theory of malarial and yellow fever transmission, and the physician who conceived the theory will go down in history as one of humanity's heroes. What reverence will be sufficient for the man who succeeds in rooting out the white plague? What a plethora there will be then of monuments and magazine articles.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

But we must not fail to remember, because it is no longer with us, that there was once just as great a plague in leprosy. And we must not forget that Francis of Assisi was a vigorous factor in enabling us to forget leprosy as we cannot forget consumption. For in the most horribly repulsive leper Francis saw Christ, and therefore kissed him. And with that kiss Francis healed not only that particular leper, as the old legend says, but the whole race of lepers in Europe. That supreme, super-human example of devotion roused men to deal with the scourge of leprosy and led the thousands who were beginning to follow Francis to work earnestly in caring for these unfortunates. If the frightful disease has disappeared from western civilization, we may thank a saint and mystic. That lesson of cleanliness and sanitation has become so fixed in our traditions that it is difficult for us to realize how hard it was to win, and how grateful we should be to the man who handed down the legacy to posterity.

But another social lesson which Francis taught his age, ours has not learned so well—the lesson of voluntary poverty. Francis practised poverty as no religious founder ever practised it before or since. In the chivalrous language of that day, he called Poverty his Lady, and he served her with a

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

devotion rivalling the love of a man for a woman. He did nothing by halves, and when he called himself poor, it was no pious fiction. Other orders have professed poverty, meaning thereby that individually the members did not hold title to property, although the community might be wealthy and give them all they needed and more. But Francis' ideal was that neither the individual nor the community should possess aught. They were not to be parasitical beggars—they were to work and pay by their labor for whatever was given to them, but all surplus was to be distributed to the poor.

“What Francis desired,” says one of his modern biographers, “was what Jesus of Nazareth desired—that men should own as little as possible, that they should work with their hands, and ask others for help when work failed them, that they should not give themselves unnecessary troubles and lay up superfluous possessions, that they should keep themselves free as birds and not let themselves be caught in the snares of the world, that they should go through life with thanks to God for His gifts and with songs of praise for the bounty of his works.”¹

By no means did Francis sanction laziness or what would now be called vagrancy. His fratelli

¹ Jörgensen, “Life of St. Francis of Assisi,” p. 79, N. Y., 1913.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

were not tramps. "I worked with my hands and moreover wanted to work, and I desired that all the brothers should be occupied with honorable work. And those who could do no work must learn it, not for the desire of remuneration, but to give good example and not to be lazy."² And in his admonitions on the rule, he wrote: "'That wisdom must be followed by work.' That wisdom only has value which leads to good works"—a thought thoroughly in line with St. James' vigorous language.³

But Francis was not content with leading a life of evangelical poverty himself, nor even with gathering about him thousands of celibate men and women to do likewise. He recognized that the true test of his doctrine of simplicity could be found only by adaptation to the normal life of most men. Unless he could persuade parents to forego the deepest desires of their hearts—to provide for their children according to the traditions of the world—he would fail. And so he sought to organize the laity to lead simpler, less luxurious, less costly lives. Those who joined his Third Order were, while remaining in the world, to dress plainly and inexpensively.

The effect was stupendous. Many who never before realized the crime of luxury were brought to

² "Opuscula," p. 79.
³ Jorgensen, p. 215.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

see the tremendous injustice of their ways; many more who had previously wished to oppose the prevailing styles but were too weak, were now buoyed up by numbers and organization to make a stand. What they were ashamed to do through real economy and individual judgment, they could now do because it was part of the rule of the society they had joined.

Never was a similar reform more needed than now. There are those who will tell you the dress of many women of today is immoral because it is immodest. But, indeed, it is far more immoral because it is stained with the life-blood of thousands. What right has any woman to put on her back in one year what would keep twenty-five families for that time? What right has any man to spend fifty thousand dollars on a single entertainment? Is it any wonder that Socialism spreads when our papers advertise such items of extravagance as the sending of a hundred thousand dollars' worth of flowers to the grave of one man?

“Among us English-speaking peoples especially,” said William James, “do the praises of poverty need to be boldly sung. We have become literally afraid to be poor. We despise anyone who elects to be poor in order to simplify and save his inner life. If he does not join the general scramble and pant with the money-making street, we deem him spirit-

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

less and lacking in ambition. We have lost the power of even imagining what the ancient idealization of poverty could have meant—the liberation from material attachments, the unbridled soul, the manlier indifference, the paying our way by what we are or do and not by what we have, the right to fling away our life at any moment irresponsibly—the more athletic trim, in short, the moral fighting shape. When we of the so-called better classes are scared as men never were scared in history at material ugliness and hardship; when we put off marriage until our house can be artistic, and quake at the thought of having a child without a bank account and doomed to manual labor, it is time for thinking men to protest against so unmanly and irreligious a state of opinion.”⁴

Would that another Francis might arise to preach simplicity to our wealthy Catholics, would that the Third Order of St. Francis might today affect the lives of men as it once did. Alas, that he should have failed so pitifully in influencing after generations in this regard. Alas, that even during his own life the leaven of worldliness should have penetrated those who at first heeded him, that they should have become covetous and have added stone to stone and

“*Varieties of Religious Experience*,” p. 368.

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

acre to acre. Can there be a revival? Is the idea dead? Or will there come some leader to tell us, she is not dead but sleepeth? Who will resurrect that glorious conception and start anew the crusade of justice and charity?

But if Francis failed to influence after generations in this particular regard, he did not fail in one of wider significance. A recent Protestant Bishop of London has said that "the two men who have had the greatest effect on modern history, in widely different ways, are Napoleon Bonaparte and Francis of Assisi." And the saying is not so far off the mark as the unthinking might suppose. Indeed, I believe we may say that Francis had even greater and more enduring influence than Napoleon. The boundaries of a nation, the family of a sovereign, the title of a ruler—and that was all Napoleon really touched—these matter little, for they do not affect the personal and intimate life of the whole people.

Francis, however, struck at and crushed an institution—feudalism—that sent its ramifications through every class of society, that embraced every man, woman and child. No one could escape it. The serf was subject to some lord, the lord to an overlord, who in turn did homage to a king or emperor. These petty lords warred incessantly

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

among themselves, consulting no man about commencing hostilities. And each liegeman was obliged to fight under his lord's banner or furnish a tax in exchange for personal service.

The tyranny of the system was tremendous. But there seemed no remedy. For centuries men had known nothing else, and only a few prophetic souls or visionary anarchists (as you choose) could dream of something different. One of these souls was Francis. The love of God and of his neighbor led him to decry war, and he insisted that his followers should not bear arms except in defense of the Church or of their nation, and should take no oath to render feudal service in the field. Had this revolution affected only his monks there would have been little stir. But men and women of the world who could not become monks or nuns were yet possessed by the spirit of this Troubadour of God. They, too, wished to be taught how to serve God, to be Franciscans.

And when Francis took them into his Third Order by the thousands, even by the hundreds of thousands, it seemed as if society were falling about the heads of the vested interests. What was to become of the counts and viscounts, the lords and lordlings if their henchmen would not fight at their command? How were they to live in ease and

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

luxury if they could not go out to pillage at will, secure of the support of their vassals? What did this impudent monk mean by urging people not to fight? It was treason against the existing order, it was like a general strike in the only business that gentlemen then engaged in—cutting other people's throats and taking their land and possessions.

This was more far-reaching in its effect than if men today would swear not to bear arms in any national army. For that would merely stamp out militarism. The economic basis of society—which prevails in time of peace as well as war, and which affects everyone most intimately—would be left intact. But Francis' reform changed the whole economic system of feudalism. To get a parallel we must imagine that men in the same numbers would today resolve no longer to be wage-slaves, and would refuse to work except for direct compensation from the purchaser or in socially conducted undertakings. Such a proceeding would mark the doom of capitalism, as Francis' movement marked the doom of feudalism.

Then as now the waning order appealed to religion for help. The counts and viscounts, lords and lordlings of that day, as do the capitalists and brokers, the steel-kings and coal-barons of our own, cried out: "Our interests are those of the Church

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

and of Society. If we fall, they fall. With our exit there will come in anarchy and irreligion, pestilence, famine, and infidelity." They asked the Church to help them against this fanatic, just as some others are now trying to use churchmen to fight Socialism.

But thank God, there was then a clear-eyed, fearless friend of the people in the chair of Peter. He could see that the interests of a class are not the interests of society; he could see that the Church could live and work and flourish without feudalism, just as it had lived before that institution was heard of, and just as it will live after the successor of feudalism is extinct. The papal power was not put forth to uphold a tottering system. Feudalism fell, democracy began. The Poor Man of Assisi conquered. The Church is freer, stronger, holier; Society is better, purer, richer than before. Church and Society are seen not to have depended upon the prosperity of a single class or of a single institution. A new manner of holding property did not have the dire effects predicted for it by its interested opponents. God had once more used the weak things of this world to confound the strong. Once again was the idealist proved to be the sanest and most practical of men.

These works of Francis have influenced not only

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

his own age and country. They persist even until today and embrace the whole world. With that peculiar vitality attaching to the labors of men of prayer, they have gone on for seven centuries in ever-widening circles. Directly or indirectly, the Poor Man of Assisi has vitally affected more millions than have the greatest of military conquerors. Alexander, Cæsar, Genghis Khan, Napoleon are mere names. No organization that they effected persists today, and no millions in loving admiration turn to them for inspiration. But the direct spiritual descendants of Francis have played their part in every country under the sun since first he sent them to the four winds. No modern country's history can be written without reference to the labors of these intrepid friars. This is especially true of our own great Southwest. And if the labors of those who wear his habit and bear his name have been so fruitful, no man can calculate the indirect influence he has exerted. Catholic and non-Catholic, democrat and socialist, have all turned to him and drawn some inspiration from his work.

And what was the secret moving force of Francis? How was it that a man who was crazy enough to prefer poverty to riches, who was fool enough to be a real Christian, could stamp out a frightful plague that had afflicted Europe for centuries; could

FRANCIS OF ASSISI

lead thousands to imitate his insane despising of material wealth; could undermine the political theory on which the whole fabric of European state-craft had been reared; and could do all this without incurring censure? How could a reformer, an initiator of new things, an attacker of men's dearest possessions—their pocketbook—succeed in that hardest of all undertakings, in safely steering against the reactionary prejudice of the time?

What, then, was his secret? It was loving contemplation of God; it was long meditation before the crucifix that culminated in the stigmatization of his own body; it was the giving his life that he might gain all; it was that he went into the desert before preaching in the city. And so, once more, retirement and the spirit of prayer were justified unto generations to come—were justified, even, as the best of preparations for the fruitfullest social activity.

IV

JOAN OF ARC—SAINT AND PATRIOT

Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O thou most mighty. . . .
Thine arrows are sharp: under thee shall people fall, into the
hearts of the king's enemies. (Psalm xliv, 4-6.)

JOAN OF ARC—SAINT AND PATRIOT

IN OUR day we have looked upon it as wonderful that a band of specially trained women of money and position should by peaceful means wring the ballot from men. What shall we say when a young peasant girl, of no education, without military training, or position, or following, claims and receives the command of a demoralized army and drives the greatest warriors of her time into the sea? It is not a question of a shepherd king after years of preparation at another's court called to rule a shepherd folk. It is a case of a shepherdess going straight from the pasture to the camp, from the bleating flock to the din of arms, from filial subjection to the command of undisciplined soldiers. "The story of her career, as one of her learned French historians has said, 'is the most marvellous episode in our history, and in all histories.' "¹

And what was the secret of such success? Who gave a girl of sixteen power greater than that of kings and princes? How could she accomplish the double task of encouraging the French and conquering the English? The odds against her were tre-

¹Luce, quoted by Lang, "The Maid of France," p. 1.

JOAN OF ARC

mendous. Half France was in the enemy's hands and a weakling king not yet crowned was cowering south of the Loire. Burgundy and other northern provinces were allied with the English. The king's forces were so demoralized that they were powerless against one-fourth their number. Agincourt was still fresh in the minds of all, and that splendid leadership of Prince Hal, so vividly depicted by Shakespeare, seemed in no danger of losing its fruits. And though the boy king, Henry VI, was already showing that weakness which finally cost him the English crown, his representative, Bedford, was no weakling.

Into such a situation came an unknown girl. She heartened half the French party, baulked a powerful faction, braced up a putty king, and in three months relieved Orleans, captured Rheims, and in the traditional manner solemnly crowned Charles VII. "It is, moreover, never to be forgotten that, during her military career, her age was from seventeen to eighteen years. At seventeen Napoleon had not won a decisive battle, had not 'taught the doubtful battle where to rage.' But that Jeanne had done this no sceptic can deny; and the doing it was but the beginning of her career of wonders."²

The secret of it all was that during her long years

² Lang, p. 6.

JOAN OF ARC

of retirement at Domremy she had made contact with the Omnipotent. There she had prayed in the village church and in the fields and had "loved the poor tenderly." From her twelfth year she held aloof from the games of her companions, and finally she achieved that union with the Source of all that forces action. God himself is pure act, as the scholastics say, and those who approach nearest to Him must act. As there is no rest, no passivity in God, so is there none in His greatest Saints. Once united to him, their powers are doubled and quadrupled. They receive a new force urging them to activity, and fructifying their labors in marvellous ways. As Lang, who would hardly be called orthodox, says: "She had that faith which moves mountains; it was by faith that she wrought military miracles for the conversion of the English."⁸

It was in the summer of 1425, when she was only thirteen and a half years old, that Joan received her first supernatural communication. At first it was simply a voice, but later she recognized St. Michael the Archangel, St. Catherine of Alexandria, and others. Not till three years later, however, did she yield to their insistent counsel that she should go help the king. Finally, when she could no longer doubt their authority, she made the journey to the

⁸P. 49.

JOAN OF ARC

neighboring town of Vaucouleurs, where was stationed the king's nearest officer. But Robert Baudricourt, captain of the town, was a rude and dissolute soldier, and putting no credence in her supernatural mission he received her with scant courtesy. "Take her home to her father, and give her a good whipping," was his advice, and more that was less honorable.

Meanwhile, as the king's situation became more desperate, Joan's Voices grew more positive. Orleans was invested in October, and by Christmas the complete conquest of France seemed close at hand. The dark outlook naturally led Joan to doubt the wisdom of her Voices, but they only became more urgent. "I am a poor girl and cannot fight," she said. "What can I do when all the trained warriors of France are powerless?" The Voices merely replied: "You can do all things with God's help. Go in His name. It is He Who commands."

So once more she set out on her apparently hopeless task of persuading Baudricourt to send her to the king. This time she would not take his positive "No" for an answer, and stayed on in the town despite his reiterated refusal. Her persistence, coupled with the prediction (afterwards verified by official dispatches) of a great French defeat outside Orleans, finally won her some recognition. Three

JOAN OF ARC

men-at-arms were detailed to accompany her, and with this escort she set out to seek the king at Chinon. From this time on she dressed in male attire.

Two days after arriving at Chinon (March 6, 1429), Joan was admitted to the presence of Charles. As she had never seen the king, a scheme was devised to test the supernaturalness of her mission. One of the courtiers assumed the regal robes and position while Charles appeared as a simple attendant. But Joan was not deceived. She immediately recognized the king, and in addition gave him some secret sign. What this sign was can only be surmised with more or less probability, but it was sufficient to win at least a half-hearted acknowledgment from Charles, despite the opposition of his favorite, La Trémoille.

From the first, however, this courtier feared and hated Joan. He immediately set about the organization of a strong party against her, and finally compassed her death. But he also served to increase her glory. For he brought out into stronger relief the wonderful power of a girl unskilled in court ways who could baffle the most astute and hearten the most cowardly. Her exploit in freeing France would have been marvellous enough without any internal opposition; with La Trémoille, the

JOAN OF ARC

Bishop of Rheims, and others arrayed against her, it is even more wonderful.

Before being employed in military operations, Joan was sent to Poitiers to be examined by a body of bishops and theologians. The minutes of the meeting have perished. We know, however, that her ardent, simple faith made a good impression. They found nothing heretical in her claims, although they did not pronounce in favor of their validity. The final recommendation was that she should be tried and tested further.

Upon returning to Chinon, Joan immediately set about her preparations for beginning the campaign. A special banner was made for her bearing a picture of our Lord between two angels, and the words "Jesus-Maria." The field was dotted with fleur-de-lis. This banner was to constitute her only weapon in battle, for Joan herself never killed an adversary. She carried a sword, however, that had been provided for her in an interesting and remarkable way. The king offered her a sword, but she insisted that search should be made behind the altar in the church of Ste. Catherine de Fierbois. Here in the spot indicated by her Voices was found an ancient sword so long buried that everyone had forgotten its existence.

Having armed herself in this fashion and clothed

JOAN OF ARC

herself in armor, Joan set out for Orleans with the largest force she could collect. On the thirteenth of April she eluded the English besiegers and entered the city. Here her presence worked wonders in heartening the French. Within a week all the English forts had been captured and the siege raised. The day before the English withdrew, Joan, as she had predicted several weeks previously, was wounded in the breast by an arrow. But, also as she had predicted, she soon recovered.

Andrew Lang has given a very vivid picture of the capture of one of the English towers, and he brings out so clearly the place of prayer in Joan's success that we must quote it at length. "At sunrise on May 7th," he writes, "Jeanne heard Mass. The attack began early in the morning. . . . The standard of the Maid floated hard by the wall till, about noonday, a bolt or arrow pierced her shoulder plate as she climbed the first ladder, and the point passed clean through the armor and body, standing out a hand's breadth behind. She shrank and wept, says her confessor. . . . Probably her place in the front rank was not long empty. There she stood under her banner and cried on her French and Scots; but they were weary and the sun fell, and men who had said that 'in a month that Fort could scarce be taken,' lost heart as the lights of Orleans

JOAN OF ARC

began to reflect themselves in the silvery waters of the Loire. . . . ‘Doubt not; the place is ours,’ called the clear, girlish voice. But Dunois ‘held that there was no hope of victory this day’; and he bade to sound the recall, and gave orders to withdraw across the river to the city. . . . ‘But then,’ continued Dunois, ‘the Maid came to me, and asked me to wait yet a little while.’ Then she mounted her horse and went alone into a vineyard, some way from the throng of men, and in that vineyard she abode in prayer about a quarter of an hour. Then she came back and straightway took her standard into her hands and planted it on the edge of the fosse. . . . The English, seeing the wounded witch again where she had stood from early morning, ‘shuddered, and fear fell upon them,’ says Dunois. . . .

“Steel, fire, water had conspired against them. Jeanne saw this last horror of the fight. She knelt, weeping and praying for her enemies and insulters. . . . The joy bells of Orleans sounded across the dark Loire, lit with red flames. . . . She had kept her word, she had shown her sign, and the tide of English arms never again surged as far as the city of St. Aignan. The victory, her companions in arms attest, was all her own. They had despaired, they were in retreat, when she, bitterly

JOAN OF ARC

wounded as she was, recalled them to the charge. Within less than a week of her first day under fire the girl of seventeen had done what Wolfe did on the heights of Abraham, what Bruce did at Bannockburn. She had gained one of the fifteen decisive battles of the world." And she had done it by prayer.

Thus in less than two months after she arrived at Chinon was the tide turned in favor of the French. And how? Lang quotes Siméon Luce as saying: "To pray, we do not say with the lips, but to pray with the whole sincerity of the heart, is to win an inexhaustible source of moral strength. This we say simply from the point of view of the man of science, who only concerns himself with the effects of a fact, and only considers truths of observation and experience."⁴

Joan wished to follow up this victory of Orleans immediately. But the king was lazy and pusillanimous, while La Trémoille and others were jealous. A short campaign, however, was begun upon the Loire. After some small successes, the important English reinforcements from Paris were crushed at Patay. This occurred on the eighteenth of June. Still, the king and his advisors did not trust the Maid, and she had great difficulty in persuading

⁴P. 105.

JOAN OF ARC

them to assault Troyes. Even after all her victories they would have retired hopelessly had she not insisted. She took the town almost single-handed, and then pushed on to Rheims. Here the king was crowned on the seventeenth of July, 1429.

With the coronation, the principal object of the Maid's mission had been accomplished. English domination in France was doomed. There was still fighting to be done, and the foreigners lingered on in the north for many years. But Paris was lost to them six years later and the English possessions were gradually restricted to Calais. Joan, however, was not satisfied. She knew from her Voices that she had less than a year of service to look forward to, and she was eager to do all that she could in so short a time.

Collecting all the force she could, therefore, she attacked Paris. But her army was insufficient, and though one of the outposts was taken, the attack, when she was wounded, was abandoned. She was gallantly cheering on her men when a bolt from a crossbow struck her in the thigh. The Duc d'Alençon forcibly removed her from the field. In all the intrigues of the English and Burgundians and the treachery of the French, the Duke stands out as a noble example of the highest chivalry. He was faithful to Joan from the first, and was always will-

JOAN OF ARC

ing to serve under her. Had all the French been as the Duc d'Alençon there would have been no burning of an innocent girl at Rouen—but then, too, no need of a deliverer.

The winter of 1429-30 was spent at court amid wasteful worldliness and heartless jealousies. Joan chafed at the delay, but it was not till April that she could take the field. Shortly after the campaign commenced her Voices announced that she would be captured before midsummer. "Would not the bravest man," asks Lang, "with the prospect of death by fire in case of capture, would not Ney, or Skobéleff, Wallace or Gordon, have blenched? But the Maid rode on, first in the charge, last in the retreat. There is no other such tale in history. She was the bravest of the brave and her bravery came from her life of prayer."⁶

Her Voices were as correct in this prophecy of capture as they had been in all their other predictions. The Maid had entered Compiègne to assist in its defense, and in a sortie fell into the hands of a much superior Burgundian force. Escape might even then have been made, except that the gates of the town had been closed by mistake. She was sold to the English for about \$100,000. Apparently no attempt was made to ransom or exchange her.

⁶P. 228.

JOAN OF ARC

Then commenced one of the saddest events in all history. Joan was cast into prison. She was lodged with rough, debauched soldiers, and was deprived of every comfort and aid to decency. Finally, after months of spirit-breaking confinement, she came for trial before a prejudiced tribunal. She knew that a recantation might save her, yet she resisted every temptation to deny her Voices. Alone before her enemies, insulted, starved, and wasted from lack of sleep, she faced her judges fearlessly. Only once did she waver, and then she recovered herself immediately. Her enemies could find nothing against her except the crime that she had beaten them in fair and open battle. But this was crime enough, and she was condemned and burnt at the stake in Rouen, May 30, 1431.

In looking back over that tragic history, what explanation can we find for her phenomenal success? All the chances were against her—her youth, her sex, her inexperience, her peasant birth. So far as the wisest could divine, the French cause was hopeless. The bravest and most capable were despairing. Their king was worse than useless and the court was split into jealous and warring factions. Burgundy alone might have entertained good hope of victory; with England as her ally, the issue seemed assured. Paris and the most important towns in

JOAN OF ARC

France were in their hands. Their forces had the irresistible *élan* that comes from past success. An unprejudiced statesman would have said that only one end was possible—the total subjugation of France.

How was it that this obscure, unknown Maid, without position, without experience, could tip the scales so far the other way? Whence did she draw her inspiration and her power? There is but one answer possible—from prayer. It was during her long meditations at Domremy that her mission came to her, and that she acquired the strength to accomplish it in spite of every obstacle. Not in courts, not in camps was a deliverer raised up, but in the quiet fields and silent country church. And so once more is proved the power of retirement as the fittingest preparation for action, once more is prayer justified by experiment.

When shall we learn this for ourselves, make it really part of our philosophy of life, know that in our case, too, a greater spirit of prayer, a greater dependence upon God, more of the cloister's quiet and peace and calm would make us stronger, better able to cope with the problems of the active life, would give to what we do a solidity and enduringness attainable in no other way? God alone is the source of all work and power and He finds no place

JOAN OF ARC

in the feverish, restless heart. Our God is a God of peace, and we must seek Him first in quiet and retirement, before He will accompany us out into the market-place.

V

IGNATIUS LOYOLA—SAINT AND EMPIRE-BUILDER

But his will is the law of the Lord, and on his law he shall meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree which is planted near the running waters, which shall bring forth its fruit in due season. And his leaf shall not fall off: and whatsoever he shall do will prosper. (Psalm i, 2-3.)

IGNATIUS LOYOLA—SAINT AND EMPIRE-BUILDER

PASSING through one of the corridors of the Jesuit university in Rome, you will see a long row of portraits of distinguished sons of St. Ignatius. There are men in that collection from all over the world. Spaniard and Italian, French and German are side by side with Dutch and Flemish, English and American. They are remarkable-looking men. No body of rulers or potentates I know can match them in forcefulness and intelligence. But probably the most remarkable thing about them is the strong family resemblance. If they had been blood instead of merely spiritual brothers they could not look more alike.

And why is this? Is this resemblance due to their having had the same artist? Or is it due to their having come under the same great spiritual leadership, and having passed through the same wonderful training of the Jesuit novitiate? Can that organization of Ignatius take a hundred men separated by all the degrees possible in the Aryan race and scattered over centuries of time, and mould them so that they think alike and look alike? I, for

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

one, think that it can. To me it does not seem beyond the tremendous genius of Ignatius Loyola.

But no matter to what may be due the likeness of these portraits, no one can deny that with an astuteness to baffle Macchiavelli, with a strength of will and a tenacity of purpose to match the boldest, with a practical common sense to be envied by the crassest materialist, he built up an organization which elicited from Richelieu—no mean judge of governments—the praise: “with such sound principles, with such well-directed views, one could govern an empire equal to the world.” Ignatius has been like a tree which is planted near running waters, he has brought forth his fruit in due season. His leaf has not fallen off, and whatsoever he has done has prospered.

Four hundred years ago, nearly, Ignatius Loyola associated with himself some half-dozen like-minded individuals in the daring undertaking of rehabilitating Rome and driving back the tremendous Protestant Revolution. Today there are twenty thousand Loyolas—Janissaries of Rome, as they have been called—and the Revolution as a religious and political power is largely spent. Its forces have been met and held in every country of Europe. Germany, England and America, if they remain Christian at all, will soon be Catholic.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

It was not warrier kings like Charles V or Philip II, nor unscrupulous statesmen such as Richelieu or Mazarin, who effected this. So far as any one man is responsible, it is the visionary of Manresa. The nations of the world have borne elequent testimony to the power of this dead man's hand by aiming at him their first blows against the Church. Whenever there is persecution of the Catholics, the Jesuits feel it first. For them there is neither quarter nor toleration. And well may they be feared by the Church's enemies. For their organization is pointed to as the most perfect in the world, and the name of Jesuit has found its way into every dictionary as a synonym for astute, farseeing sagacity.

The year before the new world was discovered there happened to be born to a Basque nobleman a son whose name was to be famous or infamous wherever men congregate. The nobleman in question was prominent in his day. His emblazoned arms represented two wolves feeding out of a camp-kettle, and by a play on the family name, the motto below was: "Lobo y Olla"—wolves and food. All of which signified that this gentleman was so rich that after his followers had been fed there was enough left for the wolves—there being an aristocracy of wealth in Spain four hundred years ago as well as in America today.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

This boy grew up to take his father's place in field and court. He could write a sonnet to my lady's eyebrow or pink an opponent with a rapier, he could dance and ride, swear and make love with the best—or worst—of the daring, reckless cavaliers of a gay court. His prospects, as the world counts such things, were bright; but had he followed them it is probable that we should know no more of him than we know of all his gallant companions.

As Providence would have it, however, he was wounded while making a spirited defense against the French, and his whole life was changed. From a brave, daring soldier and a gay, intriguing courtier, he became a Saint—and, instead of going down to the obscurity of so-called "Society" leaders, his name is blessed or cursed from China to Peru. He left the world and by so doing served it more effectively; he sought retirement and found fame. Not at the brilliant court did he lay the foundations for an immortal name, but in the silent hours of meditation at Manresa. It was in the cell of self-knowledge that he learnt to discipline his remarkable gifts, to bridle them for future service, to guide them into useful channels.

Ignatius Loyola went into that cave at Manresa an ordinary nobleman of his time—he came out the one man to cope with the Protestant Revolution.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

Never did anyone else accomplish such a feat under such unpromising circumstances. He was without theological learning and unknown in ecclesiastical circles; there was a prejudice against everything in the least degree new; the Catholic powers were everywhere going down to defeat. Spain's dominion was being questioned in the Netherlands, France was divided by civil war, and keen observers might foresee the rise of the Dutch Republic and Protestant England.

Rome was demoralized and frightened. Her old weapons were powerless against this mighty onslaught from the North, this new wandering of the nations. The man who could stem the tide of revolt must fight a double battle. He must conquer blind tradition at home and lawlessness abroad, he must educate Catholics and refute Protestants, he must reform within while defending without.

Ignatius undertook this double battle, and his sons have fought it ever since. Upon their shoulders has fallen the cloak of domestic and external enmity, of foes within the Church and foes without. In bitterness of spirit have they time and time again been forced to realize the truth of Christ's saying: "A man's enemies shall be those of his own household."

Possessing no language but his own mother

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

tongue when all the learned world used Latin, no science but that of the camp, no literature beyond the chivalrous romances of the day, Ignatius, in an age of the most intense intellectual activity, became the self-destined teacher of the teachers of the world. The first thing for him to do, therefore, was to master the learning of the day. So at the mature age of thirty, Ignatius became a schoolboy. He went to the universities at Alcala, Salamanca, and Paris. At each he fell foul of the Inquisition, but each time was acquitted. His trial at Paris brings out clearly that astuteness for which he was so remarkable in after years. While at Rouen, nursing a sick friend, he heard that he was wanted by the authorities of Paris for teaching false doctrine. Immediately he went before a notary and received official confirmation of the fact that he was starting at once for Paris. And later when haled before the ecclesiastical court at Venice, he was not satisfied with mere acquittal. He insisted upon obtaining a certificate of soundness of teaching.

Gathering together some half-dozen men at Paris, Ignatius proceeded to Rome. The time was hardly propitious for founding a new religious order, as the authorities were seriously considering the suppression of all the old ones. But Ignatius succeeded finally, and the Society of Jesus became a fact.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

From these humble beginnings has Ignatius spread his network over the whole world. Not a nation but knows his followers; not a country is too uncivilized for their labors or too cultured for their society; they are the educators of princes, the confessors of kings, the missionaries of the Esquimaux and of the Terra-del-Fuegans. In Rome they have done as the Romans, in China as the Chinese, in India as the Indians. They have been all things to all men in order that they might gain all.

Gently nurtured students, grandees of Spain and France and Italy, were forged by Ignatius into highly tempered blades to conquer the world. And in no other of their innumerable fields of activity has their success been more captivating to the imagination than in missions to the heathen. With that remarkably astute insight into character which he so often exhibited, Ignatius selected Xavier to commence this work. A poor, solitary, and unprotected stranger, Xavier burst through the barriers that separate men of different tongues and brought hundreds of thousands of the teeming races of the East under the Cross of Christ. So successful was he that he has wrung even from prejudiced critics a grudging admission of his power. "From the days of Saul of Tarsus to our own," says James Stephen, "the annals of mankind exhibit no other example

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

of a soul borne onward so triumphantly through distress and danger in all their most appalling aspects."¹ And what was the secret of his power? The same that inspired Ignatius—prayer. Even in the midst of his most striking triumph, with all the world at his feet, he retired into the silence of the desert that he might renew his strength as the eagle at the great Sun of Justice.

As missionaries the Jesuits have explored every country in the world. But they are not simply missionaries. They are also geographers, historians, grammarians, constructive statesmen. Wherever they go, everything of scientific importance and human interest receives their attention. The flora and fauna of unknown lands, the languages of unknown tribes, the courses of unknown rivers have been classified and arranged and plotted by these indefatigable mystics.

And no experiment in constructive nation-building is more interesting than the Jesuit reductions of Paraguay. In a few years and without financial resources they did what our Government in half a century with unlimited funds has not been able to accomplish. Tribes that had roamed wild over the plains of South America were gathered into towns

¹ "Ignatius Loyola and His Associates," Boston, 1854.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

and taught the arts of civilization. From savage nomads they became orderly agriculturalists, masons, carpenters. Peace and plenty took the place of war and famine.

These reductions were the largest and most successful experiment in communism that the world has ever seen. The land and everything built on it was the property of the community. While the individual families were allotted houses which they called their own, they could not sell or transfer them. For agricultural purposes some land was assigned as private plots to the individuals, but much was also cultivated in common. The products of these latter fields were put in a common storehouse and used for the poor, sick, widows, and against unforeseen contingencies. Agricultural instruments and draught animals were community property.

Every device and artifice imaginable were employed to make the naturally lazy and wandering Indians thrifty and industrious. Children were early taught to work, but under special supervision and frequently with the accompaniment of music. Besides their household duties women were obliged to spin a certain amount each week for the community. Food and dress were the same for all.

At one time these reductions embraced 150,000

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

Indians. They flourished for a century and a half. It is not too much to say that in their best days they looked after all the reasonable needs of the inhabitants in a much more thorough manner than even our best municipalities. The poor, the sick, the aged were all tenderly cared for. Unemployment, that horrible bugaboo of the modern laborer, was non-existent. Capital punishment was never administered, and the general morality of the Indians was extremely good. As Dean Funes writes, the Indians "had a certainty that large families, far from being a burden to their parents, would be their consolation; that orphanage would be without danger; widowhood would be without abandonment; sickness would be without disconsolateness, and old age without bitterness."²

It is one thing to conduct a communal organization among picked celibates, quite another and indefinitely more difficult thing to conduct one among a whole nation of married folk, and those of a lower type than European peasants. Our religious communities are successful because they restrict their membership to selected candidates who have passed a period of rigorous probation. They avoid the

² "Ensayo de la Historia Civil del Paraguay," Tom. I, p. 296, Buenos Aires, 1910; quoted by J. A. Zahm, "Through S. America's Southland," p. 398, N. Y., 1916.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

complicating elements that would come from the members forming alliances in marriage and the necessity of accepting all children born of such unions. Simplified as the problem thus is, it remains sufficiently difficult. But who that has had experience in such celibate communities would be rash enough to introduce communism into a whole nation of semi-savages? It would seem to require almost superhuman wisdom to bring such an attempt to a happy issue. Yet that is what the spiritual sons of St. Ignatius did in Paraguay.

But great as has been the work of St. Ignatius among the barbarous nations of the world, this is insignificant compared with what he has accomplished in the sphere of western civilization. If we may say that an empire does not consist in broad acres and hordes of subject peoples, but in men loyal through honor and conviction; and that a nation's real wealth is not in gold and silver and precious stones, but in human flesh and blood brought to their highest perfection; may we not say that Ignatius built up an empire stronger, vaster, more enduring than most kingdoms of this world?

We bow down in admiration before those empire builders who made their wealth by robbing and deceiving ignorant people, by mercilessly crushing competitors, by the unscrupulous abuse of power;

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

we almost deify a man who invents some scientific theory discarded in two generations; our newspapers are never tired of recording the benefactions of our millionaires to education. But here is a man who scattered colleges and universities over Europe, Asia and America. He did not, as some of our philanthropists, simply put up buildings to be called after himself while the community furnished everything else. Ignatius supplied the men and means to carry them on, and he invented a scientific pedagogy for the training of his teachers when such a thing was almost unheard of.

In an incredibly short time Ignatius had possessed himself of all the strongholds which command the public mind—the pulpit, the press, the university. Wherever the Jesuits preached, cultured and uncultured crowded to hear them. The name of Jesuit in a periodical or on the title-page of a book became a guarantee of scholarship. No field of intellectual activity was foreign to their labors, and Jesuit professors speedily achieved an international reputation, not alone in theology, but in history, letters, science.

And it was a living, growing, self-perpetuating organism Ignatius launched upon the world. What was true of the Society of Jesus while the master mind of Ignatius was in the flesh to direct its ac-

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

tivities is true today. There are in this enlightened century of ours hundreds of institutions conducted by his spiritual sons, men looking to him for inspiration, following his example, treading the path he pointed out, prefacing their active life by thirty days of absolute silence and communion with the Almighty and two years of retirement—twenty thousand Loyolas in every country of the world. Their names are famous in every branch of learning, in every department of science and letters. The roster of the men trained by them extends through three centuries down to our own Chief Justice of the United States.

For hundreds of years before Dewey sailed into Manila Bay, Jesuit meteorologists had been saving shipping from the typhoons of those eastern waters. The chamber of commerce of Shanghai publicly thanked the Jesuit observatory at Manila for its service to commerce. And when our Government took charge in the Philippines, we could not do better than to make arrangements to have the Jesuits continue their work. Their patient, painstaking scientific researches in these far-away islands of which Americans had hardly heard before the battle of Manila, were published at the expense of the United States.

Does such wonderfully successful and unbounded

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

activity in the service of mankind justify the epithet of lazy monks? Does it indicate a purely selfish seeking of one's own ease in idle dreaming that is euphemistically designated prayer? If there was one fault Ignatius hated above all others, it was laziness, and it was because he was a man of prayer. He said once to a lay brother: "If you were working for men, it might be no great fault to do it with so little pains; but to work for God so carelessly is without excuse." When he sent his sons as theologians to the Council of Trent, he commanded that four days each week they should visit the hospitals in addition to their weighty duties in the Council, and that they should lose no opportunity of doing good to their fellowmen. And nothing better refutes the charge of spiritual selfishness so often urged against the exceptionally pious than that saying of Ignatius: "If choice were given me between being made safe at once in Heaven where I could not work for others and remaining on earth with the possibility of losing my own soul but also of saving others, I should unhesitatingly choose to remain."

Has not Ignatius the Saint served society better than Loyola the cavalier? What warrior or statesman or philanthropist can point to greater, nobler, more enduring work? The hosts of Genghis Khan

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

have melted like snow in summer-time; the most laboriously laid policy of the Iron Chancellor Bismarck went to naught against the Fisherman's power; a Florence Nightingale a generation after her death is little more than a memory. But this Saint lives today, three hundred and fifty years after his death, and lives not as one but as twenty thousand.

I ask again, what is the secret of this difference? Whence is this marvellous vitality, this astonishing power of reproduction? From what immortal fountain had Ignatius drunk that he does not pale with years, but waxes stronger as the centuries pile upon each other?

It was the solitary cave at Manresa, it was the spirit of asceticism and mortification, it was the silent communing with the Almighty. That seeming retreat, that loss of time, in the world's estimation, was the highest wisdom, was the foundation of supreme success. The folly of the Cross is once more proved to be higher and more enduring than the wisdom of the children of this generation. Once more has it been shown that the best way to redeem the world is to forsake it—for a time; that if one would save the city he must first retire into the desert.

VI

VINCENT DE PAUL—SAINT AND FOUNDER OF MODERN PHILANTHROPY

Blessed is he that understandeth concerning the needy and the poor: the Lord will deliver him in the evil day. (Psalm xl, 2.)

VINCENT DE PAUL—SAINT AND FOUNDER OF MODERN PHILANTHROPY

IT IS difficult for us to enter into the conditions prevailing in another country. The task is still harder when not only distance but time separates us. And so we can hardly understand the situation that St. Vincent de Paul faced two hundred and fifty years ago in the France of Richelieu and Mazarin. But we can get some idea of the distress then prevalent if we take those facts that we do know of the France of that day and try to realize them by comparing them with conditions more familiar, because closer, to us.

We know something at least of the horrors of our own civil war. Even though we did not see it ourselves, we have heard the story from those who did. And we realize to some extent how prostrate the South was after that four-year struggle. Or to take an example closer to us in time, we know something of the exhaustion of France and Belgium today. And while this titanic struggle that has just ended in Europe is without a parallel in magnitude, yet it is probable that it was not more exhausting to the nations engaged than were those lesser wars of the seventeenth century. Means of production

VINCENT DE PAUL

have in the meantime been so perfected that a smaller percentage of the people can support the whole population than could heretofore; hence a nation of today can afford to lose more of its life-blood and material possessions than could the France of Vincent de Paul.

France, moreover, had been devastated by eight wars in thirty years. And they were the bitterest of all conflicts, because they were partly religious in their origin, and because an aggravating element was added—an appeal of either party for foreign aid. The Catholics asked Spain for help, the Protestants England. And so the country was given up to the plunder of such conscienceless mercenaries as were those of the Duke of Alva. The armies of either side had lived upon the country, seizing food, commandeering cattle, impressing horses, and ruthlessly destroying growing crops. With their homes in ruins and robbed of the possibility of repairing their fortunes from the soil, the peasants faced starvation. As a consequence they flocked to the cities by thousands to subsist as best they might.

And these wars had destroyed also the moral qualities necessary to deal with such an acute situation. Religion was at a low ebb. The clergy were dissipated, the lower classes ignorant, the upper

VINCENT DE PAUL

depraved. All the normal civilizing institutions had been demoralized. The school, the Church, the home had suffered almost irreparable injury. Those who ordinarily would have been teachers were now soldiers, and the clergy had in a lesser degree experienced a depletion of ranks. Children were growing up as orphans and half-orphans without the safeguarding influences which should have been theirs. And penetrating the whole life was an atmosphere of suspicion, hatred, and fear. During the late war we had some little experience of the demoralizing effects of such a frame of mind, but ours could not have been a circumstance to what existed in France. Civil and religious wars would naturally give greater scope for such suspicion and hatred.

In that situation there is one name that stands out beyond all others—Vincent de Paul. There seemed no basis on which to rest a campaign for improvement or for any systematic attempt to better the conditions of those who had suffered so severely in the civil strife of the time, but Vincent was undismayed. At the very time when Christian charity was more needed than at any other, at the very time when its foundation had been practically destroyed, he was raised up to restore it. France was as irreligious as it was at the time of the great Revolution

VINCENT DE PAUL

and worse off economically, and she could be saved only by one who would heal both wounds.

There were statesmen in that day, and practical sociologists of a sort, and politicians, and students who had had all the advantages of preparation that the times afforded, but they were not equal to the task. None of them, from the great Cardinal down, met the situation as effectively as did this simple priest, preoccupied with the spiritual concerns of his own soul and of those entrusted to his care. Vincent de Paul is another example of the spirit of retirement as a preparation for the greatest activity.

It is true that he was never as profoundly separated from the world as was Catherine of Siena in her little walled-up room, or Ignatius Loyola in his cave at Manresa. But his whole life was a striving after contact with God, his slightest acts were governed by a desire to do the Almighty's will, his whole policy was one of waiting for an indication from God. If you see only the social reformer in Vincent de Paul, you miss the secret of his success. He was a reformer only because he was the most spiritual of men. He was successful in worldly affairs because he had learned by long meditation on the life of Christ to be meek and humble of heart. For fifty years he labored quietly, retiredly, for his own spiritual perfection. Not till he had

VINCENT DE PAUL

passed the half century mark did he begin any of those works that have made his name famous.

And when Vincent did begin really to work, it was first at purely spiritual objects. He associated a few priests with himself to give missions for the spiritual welfare of the peasantry whose soul needs had been so completely neglected. Then, because in order to reap the fruits of those missions it was necessary to have good parish priests to continue the work, Vincent de Paul became interested in the training of priests. At the invitation of the Bishop of Beauvais, he established retreats for candidates for ordination. It was his object to impress upon them the sacredness of the obligation they were assuming and the high character of life required of them. From those about to be ordained, Vincent passed naturally to those already priests, and he organized weekly conferences on the duties of the clergy. No other influence of that day counted for so much in the regeneration of the parish priests, and through them of religion generally.

All these were spiritual works, and it was only through them that Vincent de Paul became engaged in philanthropy. First and foremost he was a man of prayer, and it was from his prayer that he drew the inspiration and the strength for his other undertakings. He loved man because he loved God, and

VINCENT DE PAUL

he was fearless and untiring because he depended not upon himself but upon God. "To overlook, even momentarily, the spiritual bias of all his actions is to fail in comprehension of their purport; to remember his charitable achievements and to forget the hours of prayer in which they germinated is to miss the real interest of his life. It is, after all, only a colorless semblance of M. Vincent that is familiar to pilgrims on the broad highway of social service. . . . If we would find the real Vincent de Paul we must seek him on the steps of Carmel, it is there only that we shall hear even an echo of his message."¹

Vincent's experience as curate and missionary taught him the urgent needs of large numbers of the people. And seeing those needs, he had to set about filling them, because his Christianity was that of St. James. "My brethren," he could well have said with the Apostle, "what doth it profit anyone to say that he hath the faith, if he have not works? Can faith save him? If a brother or a sister are without clothing and destitute of daily bread, and one of you say unto them, 'Go in peace, be ye warmed and filled,' without giving what is needful for the body, of what profit are your words to

¹ E. K. Sanders, "Vincent de Paul: Priest and Philanthropist," N. Y., 1915.

VINCENT DE PAUL

them? Even so faith if it have not works is dead in itself." (James ii, 14-17.)

To meet these needs, therefore, it was Vincent's object to establish in each parish an association that would collect alms and wisely distribute them to the poor. Gradually this led to a permanent organization known as the Daughters or Sisters of Charity. At first they lived at home and simply visited the sick. Afterwards, however, they lived in community, and gradually they found their way into every philanthropic field. Today there are twenty-five thousand Sisters of Charity doing every imaginable charitable work throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. They conduct schools and hospitals, infant asylums and orphanages. There has not been a war since the dismemberment of Poland in which they have not done heroic service. So numerous and active are they today that they are the best known of our Catholic sisterhoods. In fact, all Catholic Sisters are sometimes spoken of by non-Catholics as Sisters of Charity, because they have been so prominently before the public.

In addition to the Daughters of Charity, drawn mostly from the poorer classes, Vincent organized the Ladies of Charity. They nursed the sick and visited the prisons, besides giving generously of their substance. Among them were as many as two

VINCENT DE PAUL

hundred ladies of the highest rank and wealth, and it was through them that Vincent de Paul was able to collect such enormous sums. It has been estimated² that \$60,000,000 passed through his hands in charity, and that this sum should be multiplied by five in order to obtain its modern equivalent. Before the European War this would have seemed a gross exaggeration. But we have seen such tremendous sums given in that great struggle, one campaign alone netting more than twice this amount, that it does not now seem so improbable. The annual budget of his charitable undertakings must have been a staggering sum, and the aggregate of his years of active work may well have been several scores of millions.

But no matter how much we discount this estimate, undoubtedly he did receive very large sums. And there can be no greater proof of the power of his personality than the ease with which he secured gifts. Notable, too, is the fact that there was never the slightest whisper of scandal in connection with his collection or disbursement of this money. He was absolutely above reproach, both as regards dishonesty and carelessness. An old man whose training had been in the sanctuary rather than in the

² De Broglie "Life of Vincent de Paul," N. Y., p. 169.

VINCENT DE PAUL

counting house might very conceivably have become the dupe of designing impostors. But Vincent de Paul had the wisdom of the serpent as well as the simplicity of the dove. Friend and foe alike acknowledged his prudence and integrity.

Vincent de Paul is often represented with an infant in his arms because of his interest in foundlings. Whether or not he ever personally collected them from the streets of Paris is doubtful, but it is certain that through him an immense asylum was established. Prior to this establishment the infants exposed by their parents were placed with a certain widow to whom the government paid a small annual allowance. But as no increase was made in the allowance as the number of children increased, the institution developed into a tremendous baby-farm. Hundreds of infants annually perished from lack of care, hundreds more were sold into virtual slavery at a franc apiece to be mutilated by professional beggars.

The Ladies of Charity commenced by buying twelve such children, and installed them in a special house under the care of the Daughters of Charity. In two years the number had increased from twelve to four thousand; and the annual cost of maintenance was forty thousand livres—probably equivalent to \$120,000.00 today. Like all the other works

VINCENT DE PAUL

of a spiritual genius, this has shown the power of indefinite growth; for such asylums under the care of St. Vincent's children are now found in every country of the world and shelter untold thousands, besides having placed out thousands more.

From the very young, Vincent turned to the very old, and the Hospice of the Name of Jesus was established. Here old people of both sexes found a refuge, loving care, and work suited to their age and condition.

When the government, largely through the influence of Vincent, decided to make some provision for the paupers infesting Paris, the work was put into his hands. The old government buildings of La Salpêtrière were turned over to him. Gifts and applicants poured in, and forty thousand poor were sheltered here and given useful work. There is nothing like it in the world today. No charitable institution looks after forty thousand unemployable in ordinary industry and makes them practically self-supporting. The feat is unique in history. Not even the magnificent work of the Belgian Relief Commission is a true parallel. For the Commission was dealing with a nation of skilled workmen still largely employable and had the richest nation in the world, one hundred million strong, back of it. The Commission, moreover, had to meet only a

VINCENT DE PAUL

temporary derangement due to a sudden invasion; Vincent the quasi-permanent result of long years of disorder.

When we consider that the population of Paris at that time was probably less than five hundred thousand, this means that one-twelfth of the people were without other means of livelihood. Hence we get some idea of the prevalent misery of France at this period. Picture to yourself one in every twelve of the people you meet as being dependent upon public charity. And imagine, if you can, the enormous administrative labors connected with the undertaking of providing them with self-supporting work and shelter. We stand in awe at the ability of a captain of industry to employ forty thousand able-bodied strong-willed individuals. What are we to think of a man who can take as many weak, deficient, cast-off people and, in an exhausted land, find support for them? And this was only one of the many undertakings that Vincent carried to fruition.

During the Fronde rebellion in Paris, soup was through his care daily distributed to fifteen or sixteen thousand refugees, and eight or nine hundred young women were sheltered. He did all he could to excite Anne of Austria to clemency and urged her to give up the counsels of Mazarin.

VINCENT DE PAUL

Without fear, because he sought only to do God's will, he pleaded with Mazarin himself to resign.

But Vincent did not confine himself to Paris. Through the Fathers of the Mission and the Sisters of Charity, he reached every province of France. By his direction, economic kitchens were established where the worthy poor could buy nourishing soup at the lowest possible price. Societies were formed to care for the sick and to bury the dead. Seeds were distributed to the farmers so that they might renew the cultivation of the soil.

In short, Vincent de Paul was such a source of energy and practical common sense that he deserves the title accorded him of Father of modern philanthropy. He was a founder of organized charity, establishing permanent institutions in charge of professional workers to distribute what others donated. And to him may be traced our modern hospitals, orphanages, and asylums of all sorts. Indeed, many of the best of them are even now under the control of his spiritual daughters. In the care of the deserving poor who can work, but who need more discipline than is possible under our privately organized industry, he was far in advance of our own times. Anyone who has labored among the unemployed has longed for some such institution as La Salpêtrière, where they would be given work

VINCENT DE PAUL

and discipline without the stigma attaching to the workhouse. Today more than ever we need an institution to take care of men who cannot keep away from drugs, or who are lazy, or who cannot get along with their fellows. They cannot be employed by private concerns, because they cannot be depended upon. They need the strengthening influence of religion and the strong discipline such as only a well-organized institution can give.

And the mainspring of all this energy and wisdom of Vincent de Paul was spiritual. For fifty years he led such a retired, obscure life that had he died during that time his name would never have been heard in the twentieth century. But having acquired the necessary force from contact with the Source of all power, God himself, he felt impelled to go out to work in the world's metropolis. He was at an age when most men stop working, but his activity was so well directed that the ripples he set up have continued to spread throughout the world, increasing in power and effectiveness as time goes on. Where the so-called "practical men" of his time failed, this devotee of prayer succeeded.

Prayer was the foundation and secret of his success. He was not practical in the sense of giving all his time to material concerns. Even when thousands were depending upon his direction, he spent

VINCENT DE PAUL

hours a day in communion with God. As some of our most successful business men today systematically spend an hour or two in outdoor exercise, filling their lungs with ozone that translates itself into increased capacity for work; so did Vincent de Paul regularly fill his lungs, as it were, with the breath of God through prayer, and thereby increase his power of accomplishment. The most "practical" business men are not those who give every minute to business, but those who know the value of exercise and recreation and God's outdoors. In the same degree or greater, those are not the most practical servants of humanity who spend every minute in active service, but those who know how to quiet nerves and purify motives and energize action by prayer to the God of all.

Nor was Vincent de Paul practical in the sense of not caring how or where he got money for his poor. His faith in God was so strong that he trusted entirely in Him and not at all in human means. He would not accept "tainted money," and his appeal was to the highest Christian instincts, not to low, gambling, selfish interests. There were no bazaars or wheels of fortune for him. He went to the heart of the matter and declared: "When your brothers lack bread, you have no right to silks and satins. As Christians you are bound to give

VINCENT DE PAUL

of your superfluity." He saw Christ in the poor, and that made a great many things plain to him.

Without prayer, Vincent de Paul would have died an obscure, unknown peasant; with prayer and fifty years of retirement, God so fructified his labors that they have lasted unto this day. When shall we learn that the wisdom of this world is folly, that the source of all strength and power and lasting achievement is God alone? We cannot serve two masters, God and Mammon, and God only is worthy of our service. Will we not from this day forward resolve to serve God better, to pray harder, to seek more earnestly and sincerely for personal union with our Creator? Will we not take some of the time and energy we are putting into money-making, and spend it in silent converse with God? If we do seek first the kingdom of God, the same Lord Who crowned Vincent's labors with such phenomenal success, will, according to His infallible promise, add unto us also all things else.

VII

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

Religion clean and undefiled before God and the Father, is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their tribulation: and to keep one's self unspotted from this world. (St. James i, 27.)

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

IF THE tremendous scientific development of the nineteenth century has taught us anything, it has taught us the inexhaustible activity of God. Our little football of a world is no longer the center of creation. The limits of the insignificant universe known to the ancients have been pushed back on every side.

Our earth and sun and planets are but a speck of dust in the great cosmos around us. With powerful telescopes we can stretch out for millions of miles to some star never gazed upon of yore—so far, indeed, that it may long ago have been extinguished and we just now perceive as light the ether vibration set up in that far-off day. The intervening space we know is almost choked with star dust, with worlds as numerous as are the grains of sand upon the ocean shore.

And at the same time that we make the universe indefinitely bigger than our fathers dreamt of, whole microcosms that they could not see are now visible in every particle of matter. Wonderfully delicate instruments have shown us how tiny drops of water contain their own little worlds with mil-

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

lions of microscopic creatures living their lives in happy unconsciousness of their limitations.

Moreover, the universe that has been stretched out to such staggering proportions at both ends has also been extended to unimaginable lengths of time. All this has been going on not merely for six, or eight, or ten thousand years as was once thought to have been revealed. The Mosaic cosmogony, literally interpreted, has been found inadequate; and the origin of our earth has been placed by some scientists at hundreds of millions of years ago. And yet long before this diminutive bubble of a petty twenty-five thousand miles in girth broke from our sun and started coursing through space as a separate entity—long before our sun broke from some larger sun—the great cosmic force had perhaps been working for innumerable aeons of years.

And when science has taken us thus far in our conception of God, philosophy steps in to help us further. The Author of this unimaginably tremendous and unimaginably complicated universe is not some absentee Mechanic Who has set the works in motion and stands aside watching this huge machine, or is interested in some new toy. The Creator is continuing to create, He is constantly exerting the same force to keep the universe in existence that He did to originate it.

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

Some of the ancients used to fable about each star having its own angel to guide it through space. But in a more real sense it has God to guide it. God is present everywhere in this ever-enlarging cosmos by His knowledge, by His power, by His essence. He knows the slightest happening of the tiniest molecule, or atom, or ion, or whatever may be the latest ultimate of science, and, with the same undisturbed calm, He beholds the immense cosmic storms of which we perceive but a reflection in sun spots or other solar disturbances.

"He sees with equal eye as God of all
A hero perish or a sparrow fall,
Atoms or systems into ruin hurled,
And now a bubble burst, and now a world."

—Pope, "Essay on Man."

His power it is that supports both the bacillus and the leviathan; not only the attraction of one molecule for another, but likewise the comet sweeping across our vision once a century obey His law. And this knowledge and this power are not from without, they are not external—for God is there. No place is too big or too small for God, no being too large or too tiny for the interpenetration of His essence. He is whole and entire everywhere, and everywhere He is force, energy, power, work. "My Father worketh until now, and I work," said Christ.

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

The impulse back of this unceasing activity is love—outgoing, diffusive, all-embracing love. The self-sufficient all-perfect God could not rest self-contained. He must communicate Himself to others. He must let others share in His perfections, from the simple existence of a sand-grain to the intensest life of the highest angel. God must love and God must work. For love without good works is dead; is not love but some base counterfeit of love.

And this overmastering drive of love did not stop here. God did not simply create the world and turn it adrift. “For God so loved the world as to give His Only-Begotten Son.” Christ, the Second Person of the divine Trinity, came on earth to teach us how to be god-like—how to love and how to serve. The birth which we celebrate at Christmas was but the beginning of a life of unparalleled service. Christ came on earth to be our Model, the Exemplar to which we should conform our lives. And the great lesson standing out in Christ’s life is charity, is love—true, real, genuine love, not a mere sentimental affection, but a continual serving, a doing for others unto death upon the Cross. For greater love no man hath that he lay down his life for his friend. (John xv, 13.)

That is the climax of love, than which there is none higher; but there is no degree of love without

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

its degree of giving of self, of service, of work for our neighbor.

And we who wish to model our lives after that of Christ must love and serve. It is not enough to do only one. We must not merely love, but we must work; and we must not merely work, but we must work because we love. The one must strengthen and feed and support the other. If we do not serve, we cannot love; if we do not love, we cannot serve with the greatest effectiveness.

Our lives must follow in general outline the life of Christ, our Model, and the lives of those heroes who have come after Him and walked in His Foot-steps. First must come our life of ordinary activity; then our retirement to the desert to quicken and purify and intensify our love; and finally the supreme laying down of our life for others. Our religion must conform to the standard of St. James, "This, then, is religion pure and undefiled, that you visit the fatherless and the widows and keep yourselves unspotted from this world."

Simply to visit the fatherless and the widows will not suffice. Our service must be pure, unspotted, shot through and through with love. But we cannot keep ourselves unspotted from this world, no matter how deep our retirement, unless we serve. For merely to retire from the world in order to avoid

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

its temptations is to succumb to them, is to yield to the most insidious form of selfishness, is hopelessly to deceive ourselves.

If every Christian had lived up to this definition of St. James, how different would be the world today! And because the world is not different, men say that Christianity is a failure. Impressed by the tremendous amount of misery and sin around us in nations calling themselves Christian, are we ourselves not inclined to share such an opinion? The outlook is so hopeless, the task of doing anything to stop this constant stream of physical and moral wreckage is so insuperable, that we almost feel civilization *is* a disease, as some one has said, incurable except by some barbarian cataclysm such as has swept away every nation of the past when it became too rotten in the eyes of God and men. History, as Heinrich Pesch says, has but one way of arguing—the *reductio ad absurdum*—and she has abundantly proved in the past that a polity where vice and corruption are flaunted so publicly as with us cannot long endure.

But Christianity is not a failure. It is not a failure because it has never been tried—on any large scale. Have you, and you, and you, really tried to live according to the dictates of Christ? Have you made the Eight Beatitudes part of your daily

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

lives? Has not Christianity meant to you simply the mumbling of a few prayers night and morning, the going to Mass on Sunday, the abstaining from meat on Friday?

Has it meant deep, earnest, overmastering love for Christ, love that must go out in service to others? Has it meant the immolation of self for our neighbor? Have we been priests and Levites, or have we been Samaritans? If Christ were on earth today, would he hold up us, His nominal followers, as mere formalists, as he did the Scribes and Pharisees; and would he choose Salvation Armyists or Socialists as examples of real brotherly love? Have we visited the fatherless and the widows, the friendless of every description? Has our sympathy always wept and sorrowed with the oppressed?

Yes, it is not Christianity that has failed, but Christians. They have failed to live their religion. They have been of those who said "Lord, Lord," without doing the Will of the Father Who is in Heaven. They have given lip service, while by their actions they have denied Christ. The greatest enemies of Christianity have been her own children; have been those who made religion to consist in mere external form instead of in visiting the fatherless and the widows; those who have imagined

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

that they could fulfill the First Commandment without the Second.

But the only indication we can ever have that we love God, said St. Teresa, is that we love our neighbor. And those people who judge us and our religion by the amount of practical good we do to others, are wise in their generation. If we are really Christians, we must love our neighbor as ourselves, we must do unto others as we would have them do unto us, until all earnest-minded persons muse perforce exclaim, not simply, See how these Catholics love *one another*; but, See how these Catholics love *all men*—rich and poor, old and young, white and black, American and European, Aryan and Mongolian. See how these Catholics love their fellowmen and work for their betterment—for they cannot love without working. See how earnestly they are laboring to improve conditions, to build sanitary dwellings, to ward off unnecessary sickness, to root out vice, to eliminate pauperism, to alleviate all human suffering—to bring God's Kingdom upon Earth.

That is the kind of Christian and Catholic we must be, rather than that other kind whose religion consists in mere verbiage. Unfortunately there are Catholics who sit idly with folded hands living upon the reputation of their ancestors in religion, un-

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

mindful of the fact that all their churchgoing and lip-loyalty are worthless without good works. None so quick as they to tell you what the Church *has* done. They will prove from all sorts of musty records that the Church never was opposed to science; what are they doing to prove it by their actions? There are Catholics who will descant for hours on the medieval guild; what are they doing to make trade unions better today? There are Catholics who will argue to the divinity of the Church from the claim that she abolished slavery and serfdom; what are they doing to mitigate child labor and wage-slavery? There are Catholics who boast of how the Church has elevated the position of woman; what are they doing now to ameliorate the condition of working-women?

A knowledge of what our co-religionists have done and a pride in their accomplishments is good and praiseworthy. But this should be an inspiration to spur us on to emulate their glorious deeds, not an excuse for resting upon their achievements. Looked at from the standpoint of apologetics, which is superior—the telling of what other people have done in the past, or the doing of those things ourselves in the present?

No one who has the love of God in his heart can hesitate about the answer; no one who has grasped

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

the meaning of God's never-resting energy can doubt what would be more pleasing to Him; no one who has understood the lesson of Christ's life can help knowing what He would do. Christ never wrote a word. His whole life was spent in doing. And when the disciples of John came to ask who He was, He indulged in no long argument from the prophets, in no burst of oratory, in no dependence upon what Moses or someone else had done, but he pointed to His own work: the deaf hear, the blind see, the lame walk, the poor have the Gospel preached unto them.

The way to convert the world is not by writing learned treatises paring down the theory of inspiration until you have nothing left, nor is it by complicated controversies on grace or the Trinity. It is true that a certain amount of written apology is necessary. We must have our books on scriptural and other difficulties to meet a peculiar type of mind. But the great apologetic work of the Church is not done in this way. People are seldom converted by printer's ink. When persons come to us wishing to be instructed, we usually find that their reason for wishing to be a Catholic is because someone of their acquaintances is a Catholic and is the better for the fact. It was not controversies that converted the pagan world, but the lives that wrung from their

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

persecutors the involuntary tribute, See how these Christians love one another.

And we who are trying to walk in Christ's footsteps must apologize for our faith in the same way, must, like Him, point to works. For love is God and God is love and love is the essence of Christianity; love that goes out in work, that spends itself in laboring for others without counting costs, without asking for reward. Love is God, and love is the great force that rules the universe. Love it is that makes the tides to flow and the seasons to follow one another, love it is that makes the sun to rise, and keeps the planets in their courses; finally, love it is that has brought each one of us into existence. Unless we feel this universal force, unless we yield to it, we are out of harmony with Nature's law, and Nature will eliminate us as unfit. We cannot live unless we love, we cannot love unless we work. If any man say that he is serving his fellows and yet does not love God, he is not doing his best and most effective work; if any man say that he loves God, and does not serve his fellows, he either has not reached the height of love, or he lies. We have Apostolic authority for the statement. (John iv, 20.)

As we go back in imagination through the nineteen centuries since Christ's birth and see the divine Child cradled in Bethlehem while angel voices sing

THE APOLOGY OF WORKS

of peace on earth to men of good will, and as we look into

"Those eyes which burn thro' smiles that fade in tears," and read there that mute appeal for us to help on that reign, and as the crib fades slowly and instead of the stable at Bethlehem we see our own church and in place of the crib the tabernacle door where that same Infant now lies cradled in sacramental presence: do we not resolve that henceforth we shall practice the apology of works, that we shall lead others unto a knowledge of this God-Man through showing what He has done for us, by exhibiting in our own lives the same love and service towards our neighbor that He showed, that we shall labor to be real lovers and true Christians, so that some day the angelic song shall be known and understood of all men: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men of good will.

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